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OF

## BRET HARTE

*COLLECTED AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR*



VOL. II.


*EARLIER PAPERS, SPANISH AND AMERICAN LEGENDS,  
TALES OF THE ARGONAUTS, ETC.*

A NEW EDITION

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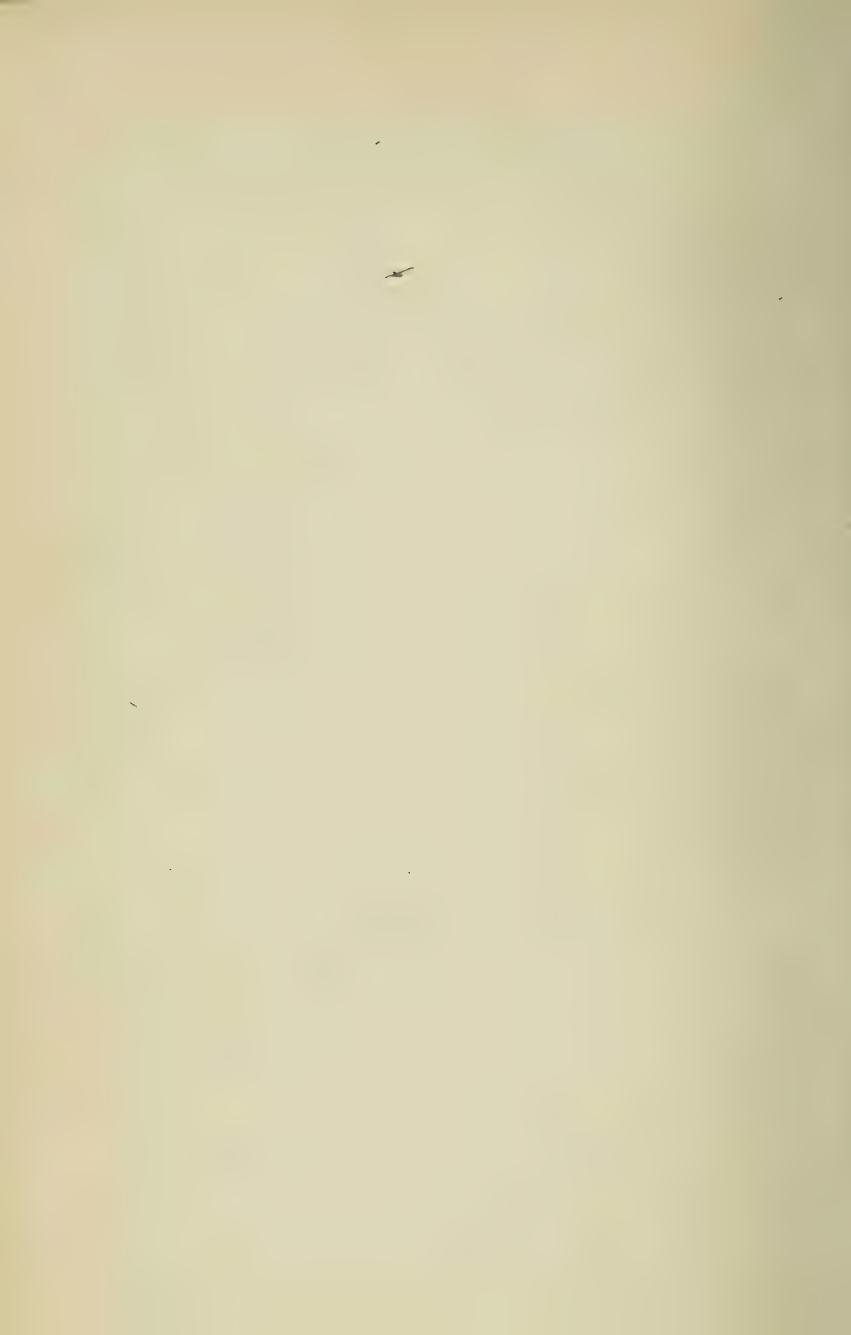
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PROSE.

*EARLIER PAPERS.*



## Miss.

### CHAPTER I.

JUST where the Sierra Nevada begins to subside in gentler undulations, and the rivers grow less rapid and yellow, on the side of a great red mountain, stands "Smith's Pocket." Seen from the red road at sunset, in the red light and the red dust, its white houses look like the outcroppings of quartz on the mountain-side. The red stage, topped with red-shirted passengers, is lost to view half-a-dozen times in the tortuous descent, turning up unexpectedly in out-of-the-way places, and vanishing altogether within a hundred yards of the town. It is probably owing to this sudden twist in the road that the advent of a stranger at Smith's Pocket is usually attended with a peculiar circumstance. Dismounting from the vehicle at the stage-office, the too-confident traveller is apt to walk straight out of town under the impression that it lies in quite another direction. It is related that one of the tunnel-men, two miles from town, met one of these self-reliant passengers with a carpet-bag, umbrella, *Harper's Magazine*, and other evidences of "civilisation and refinement," plodding along over the road he had just ridden, vainly endeavouring to find the settlement of Smith's Pocket.

An observant traveller might have found some compensation for his disappointment in the weird aspect of that vicinity. There were huge fissures on the hill-side, and

displacements of the red soil, resembling more the chaos of some primary elemental upheaval than the work of man; while, half-way down, a long flume straddled its narrow body and disproportionate legs over the chasm, like an enormous fossil of some forgotten antediluvian. At every step smaller ditches crossed the road, hiding in their shallow depths unlovely streams that crept away to a clandestine union with the great yellow torrent below, and here and there were the ruins of some cabin with the chimney alone left intact, and the hearthstone open to the skies.

The settlement of Smith's Pocket owed its origin to the finding of a "pocket" on its site by a veritable Smith. Five thousand dollars were taken out of it in one half-hour by Smith. Three thousand dollars were expended by Smith and others in erecting a flume and in tunnelling. And then Smith's Pocket was found to be only a pocket, and subject, like other pockets, to depletion. Although Smith pierced the bowels of the great red mountain, that five thousand dollars was the first and last return of his labour. The mountain grew reticent of its golden secrets, and the flume steadily ebbed away the remainder of Smith's fortune. Then Smith went into quartz-mining; then into quartz-milling; then into hydraulics and ditching, and then by easy degrees into saloon-keeping. Presently it was whispered that Smith was drinking a great deal; then it was known that Smith was a habitual drunkard, and then people began to think, as they are apt to, that he had never been anything else. But the settlement of Smith's Pocket, like that of most discoveries, was happily not dependent on the fortune of its pioneer, and other parties projected tunnels and found pockets. So Smith's Pocket became a settlement, with its two fancy stores, its two hotels, its one express-office, and its two first families. Occasionally its one long straggling street was overawed by the assumption of the

latest San Francisco fashions, imported per express, exclusively to the first families ; making outraged Nature, in the ragged outline of her furrowed surface, look still more homely, and putting personal insult on that greater portion of the population to whom the Sabbath, with a change of linen, brought merely the necessity of cleanliness, without the luxury of adornment. Then there was a Methodist Church, and hard by a Monte-Bank, and a little beyond, on the mountain-side, a graveyard ; and then a little schoolhouse.

“The Master,” as he was known to his little flock, sat alone one night in the schoolhouse, with some open copy-books before him, carefully making those bold and full characters which are supposed to combine the extremes of chirographical and moral excellence, and had got as far as “Riches are deceitful,” and was elaborating the noun with an insincerity of flourish that was quite in the spirit of his text, when he heard a gentle tapping. The woodpeckers had been busy about the roof during the day, and the noise did not disturb his work. But the opening of the door, and the tapping continuing from the inside, caused him to look up. He was slightly startled by the figure of a young girl, dirty and shabbily clad. Still, her great black eyes, her coarse, uncombed, lustreless black hair falling over her sunburned face, her red arms and feet streaked with the red soil, were all familiar to him. It was Melissa Smith,—Smith’s motherless child.

“What can she want here?” thought the master. Everybody knew “Miss,” as she was called, throughout the length and height of Red Mountain. Everybody knew her as an incorrigible girl. Her fierce, ungovernable disposition, her mad freaks, and lawless character, were in their way as proverbial as the story of her father’s weaknesses, and as philosophically accepted by the townsfolk. She wrangled

with and fought the schoolboys with keener invective and quite as powerful arm. She followed the trails with a woodman's craft, and the master had met her before, miles away, shoeless, stockingless, and bareheaded on the mountain road. The miners' camps along the stream supplied her with subsistence during these voluntary pilgrimages in freely-offered alms. Not but that a larger protection had been previously extended to Mliss. The Rev. Joshua McSnagley, "stated" preacher, had placed her in the hotel as servant, by way of preliminary refinement, and had introduced her to his scholars at Sunday-school. But she threw plates occasionally at the landlord, and quickly retorted to the cheap witticisms of the guests, and created in the Sabbath-school a sensation that was so inimical to the orthodox dulness and placidity of that institution, that, with a decent regard for the starched frocks and unblemished morals of the two pink-and-white-faced children of the first families, the reverend gentleman had her ignominiously expelled. Such were the antecedents and such the character of Mliss as she stood before the master. It was shown in the ragged dress, the unkempt hair, and bleeding feet, and asked his pity. It flashed from her black, fearless eyes, and commanded his respect.

"I come here to-night," she said rapidly and boldly, keeping her hard glance on his, "because I knew you was alone. I wouldn't come here when them gals was here. I hate 'em and they hates me. That's why. You keep school, don't you? I want to be teachd!"

If to the shabbiness of her apparel and uncomeliness of her tangled hair and dirty face she had added the humility of tears, the master would have extended to her the usual moiety of pity, and nothing more. But, with the natural though illogical instincts of his species, her boldness awakened in him something of that respect which all original

natures pay unconsciously to one another in any grade. And he gazed at her the more fixedly as she went on still rapidly, her hand on that door-latch, and her eyes on his :—

“My name’s Mliss,—Mliss Smith! You can bet your life on that. My father’s Old Smith,—Old Bummer Smith,—that’s what’s the matter with him. Mliss Smith,—and I’m coming to school!”

“Well?” said the master.

Accustomed to be thwarted and opposed, often wantonly and cruelly, for no other purpose than to excite the violent impulses of her nature, the master’s phlegm evidently took her by surprise. She stopped; she began to twist a lock of her hair between her fingers; and the rigid line of upper lip, drawn over the wicked little teeth, relaxed and quivered slightly. Then her eyes dropped, and something like a blush struggled up to her cheek, and tried to assert itself through the splashes of redder soil, and the sunburn of years. Suddenly she threw herself forward, calling on God to strike her dead, and fell quite weak and helpless, with her face on the master’s desk, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break.

The master lifted her gently and waited for the paroxysm to pass. When, with face still averted, she was repeating between her sobs the *mea culpa* of childish penitence,—that “she’d be good, she didn’t mean to,” &c., it came to him to ask her why she had left Sabbath-school.

Why had she left the Sabbath-school?—why? Oh, yes! What did he (McSnagley) want to tell her she was wicked for? What did he tell her that God hated her for? If God hated her, what did she want to go to Sabbath-school for? *She* didn’t want to be “beholden” to anybody who hated her.

Had she told McSnagley this?

Yes, she had.

The master laughed. It was a hearty laugh, and echoed so oddly in the little schoolhouse, and seemed so inconsistent and discordant with the sighing of the pines without, that he shortly corrected himself with a sigh. The sigh was quite as sincere in its way, however, and after a moment of serious silence he asked about her father.

Her father? What father? Whose father? What had he ever done for her? Why did the girls hate her? Come now! what made the folks say, "Old Bummer Smith's Mliss!" when she passed? Yes; oh, yes! She wished he was dead,—she was dead,—everybody was dead; and her sobs broke forth anew.

The master then, leaning over her, told her as well as he could what you or I might have said after hearing such unnatural theories from childish lips; only bearing in mind perhaps better than you or I the unnatural facts of her ragged dress, her bleeding feet, and the omnipresent shadow of her drunken father. Then, raising her to her feet, he wrapped his shawl around her, and bidding her come early in the morning, he walked with her down the road. There he bade her "good night." The moon shone brightly on the narrow path before them. He stood and watched the bent little figure as it staggered down the road, and waited until it had passed the little graveyard and reached the curve of the hill, where it turned and stood for a moment, a mere atom of suffering outlined against the far-off patient stars. Then he went back to his work. But the lines of the copy-book thereafter faded into long parallels of never-ending road, over which childish figures seemed to pass sobbing and crying into the night. Then, the little schoolhouse seeming lonelier than before, he shut the door and went home.

The next morning Mliss came to school. Her face had been washed, and her coarse black hair bore evidence of

recent struggles with the comb, in which both had evidently suffered. The old defiant look shone occasionally in her eyes, but her manner was tamer and more subdued. Then began a series of little trials and self-sacrifices, in which master and pupil bore an equal part, and which increased the confidence and sympathy between them. Although obedient under the master's eye, at times during recess, if thwarted or stung by a fancied slight, Mliss would rage in ungovernable fury, and many a palpitating young savage, finding himself matched with his own weapons of torment, would seek the master with torn jacket and scratched face, and complaints of the dreadful Mliss. There was a serious division among the townspeople on the subject; some threatening to withdraw their children from such evil companionship, and others as warmly upholding the course of the master in his work of reclamation. Meanwhile, with a steady persistence that seemed quite astonishing to him on looking back afterward, the master drew Mliss gradually out of the shadow of her past life, as though it were but her natural progress down the narrow path on which he had set her feet the moonlit night of their first meeting. Remembering the experience of the evangelical McSnagley, he carefully avoided that Rock of Ages on which that unskilful pilot had shipwrecked her young faith. But if, in the course of her reading, she chanced to stumble upon those few words which have lifted such as she above the level of the older, the wiser, and the more prudent,—if she learned something of a faith that is symbolised by suffering, and the old light softened in her eyes, it did not take the shape of a lesson. A few of the plainer people had made up a little sum by which the ragged Mliss was enabled to assume the garments of respect and civilisation; and often a rough shake of the hand and words of homely commendation from a red-shirted and burly figure sent a glow

to the cheek of the young master, and set him to thinking if it was altogether deserved.

Three months had passed from the time of their first meeting, and the master was sitting late one evening over the moral and sententious copies, when there came a tap at the door, and again Mliss stood before him. She was neatly clad and clean-faced, and there was nothing perhaps but the long black hair and bright black eyes to remind him of his former apparition. "Are you busy?" she asked. "Can you come with me?"—and on his signifying his readiness, in her own wilful way she said, "Come, then, quick!"

They passed out of the door together and into the dark road. As they entered the town the master asked her whither she was going. She replied, "To see my father."

It was the first time he had heard her call him by that filial title, or indeed anything more than "Old Smith" or the "Old man." It was the first time in three months that she had spoken of him at all, and the master knew she had kept resolutely aloof from him since her great change. Satisfied from her manner that it was fruitless to question her purpose, he passively followed. In out-of-the-way places, low grogeries, restaurants, and saloons, in gambling-hells and dance-houses, the master, preceded by Mliss, came and went. In the reeking smoke and blasphemous outcries of low dens, the child, holding the master's hand, stood and anxiously gazed, seemingly unconscious of all in the one absorbing nature of her pursuit. Some of the revellers, recognising Mliss, called to the child to sing and dance for them, and would have forced liquor upon her but for the interference of the master. Others, recognising him, mutely made way for them to pass. So an hour slipped by. Then the child whispered in his ear that there was a cabin on the other side of the creek crossed by the long flume where she thought he still might be. Thither they crossed,—a toilsome

half-hour's walk,—but in vain. They were returning by the ditch at the abutment of the flume, gazing at the lights of the town on the opposite bank, when suddenly, sharply, a quick report rang out on the clear night air. The echoes caught it, and carried it round and round Red Mountain, and set the dogs to barking all along the streams. Lights seemed to dance and move quickly on the outskirts of the town for a few moments, the stream rippled quite audibly beside them, a few stones loosened themselves from the hill-side and splashed into the stream, a heavy wind seemed to surge the branches of the funereal pines, and then the silence seemed to fall thicker, heavier, and deadlier. The master turned towards Miss with an unconscious gesture of protection, but the child had gone. Oppressed by a strange fear, he ran quickly down the trail to the river's bed, and jumping from boulder to boulder, reached the base of Red Mountain and the outskirts of the village. Midway of the crossing he looked up and held his breath in awe. For high above him on the narrow flume he saw the fluttering little figure of his late companion crossing swiftly in the darkness.

He climbed the bank, and, guided by a few lights moving about a central point on the mountain, soon found himself breathless among a crowd of awestricken and sorrowful men.

Out from among them the child appeared, and, taking the master's hand, led him silently before what seemed a ragged hole in the mountain. Her face was quite white, but her excited manner gone, and her look that of one to whom some long-expected event had at last happened,—an expression that to the master in his bewilderment seemed almost like relief. The walls of the cavern were partly propped by decaying timbers. The child pointed to what appeared to be some ragged, cast-off clothes left in the hole by the late occupant. The master approached nearer with his flaming

dip, and bent over them. It was Smith, already cold, with a pistol in his hand and a bullet in his heart, lying beside his empty pocket.

## CHAPTER II.

THE opinion which McSnagley expressed in reference to a "change of heart" supposed to be experienced by Miss was more forcibly described in the gulches and tunnels. It was thought there that Miss had "struck a good lead." So when there was a new grave added to the little enclosure, and at the expense of the master a little board and inscription put above it, the *Red Mountain Banner* came out quite handsomely, and did the fair thing to the memory of one of "our oldest pioneers," alluding gracefully to that "bane of noble intellects," and otherwise genteelly shelving our dear brother with the past. "He leaves an only child to mourn his loss," says the *Banner*, "who is now an exemplary scholar, thanks to the efforts of the Rev. Mr. McSnagley." The Rev. McSnagley, in fact, made a strong point of Miss's conversion, and, indirectly attributing to the unfortunate child the suicide of her father, made affecting allusions in Sunday-school to the beneficial effects of the "silent tomb," and in this cheerful contemplation drove most of the children into speechless horror, and caused the pink-and-white scions of the first families to howl dismally and refuse to be comforted.

The long dry summer came. As each fierce day burned itself out in little whiffs of pearl-grey smoke on the mountain summits, and the upspringing breeze scattered its red embers over the landscape, the green wave which in early

spring upheaved above Smith's grave grew sere and dry and hard. In those days the master, strolling in the little churchyard of a Sabbath afternoon, was sometimes surprised to find a few wild flowers plucked from the damp pine-forests scattered there, and oftener rude wreaths hung upon the little pine cross. Most of these wreaths were formed of a sweet-scented grass, which the children loved to keep in their desks, intertwined with the plumes of the buckeye, the syringa, and the wood-anemone; and here and there the master noticed the dark blue cowl of the monk's-hood, or deadly aconite. There was something in the odd association of this noxious plant with these memorials which occasioned a painful sensation to the master deeper than his esthetic sense. One day, during a long walk, in crossing a wooded ridge he came upon Mliss in the heart of the forest, perched upon a prostrate pine, on a fantastic throne formed by the hanging plumes of lifeless branches, her lap full of grasses and pine-burrs, and crooning to herself one of the negro melodies of her younger life. Recognising him at a distance, she made room for him on her elevated throne, and with a grave assumption of hospitality and patronage that would have been ridiculous had it not been so terribly earnest, she fed him with pine-nuts and crab-apples. The master took that opportunity to point out to her the noxious and deadly qualities of the monk's-hood, whose dark blossoms he saw in her lap, and extorted from her a promise not to meddle with it as long as she remained his pupil. This done,—as the master had tested her integrity before,—he rested satisfied, and the strange feeling which had overcome him on seeing them died away.

Of the homes that were offered Mliss when her conversion became known, the master preferred that of Mrs. Morpher, a womanly and kind-hearted specimen of South-Western efflorescence, known in her maidenhood as the "Per-rairie

Rose." Being one of those who contend resolutely against their own natures, Mrs. Morpher, by a long series of self-sacrifices and struggles, had at last subjugated her naturally careless disposition to principles of "order," which she considered, in common with Mr. Pope, as "Heaven's first law." But she could not entirely govern the orbits of her satellites, however regular her own movements, and even her own "Jeemes" sometimes collided with her. Again her old nature asserted itself in her children. Lycurgus dipped into the cupboard "between meals," and Aristides came home from school without shoes, leaving those important articles on the threshold, for the delight of a barefooted walk down the ditches. Octavia and Cassandra were "keerless" of their clothes. So with but one exception, however much the "Prairie Rose" might have trimmed and pruned and trained her own matured luxuriance, the little shoots came up defiantly wild and straggling. That one exception was Clytemnestra Morpher, aged fifteen. She was the realisation of her mother's immaculate conception,—neat, orderly, and dull.

It was an amiable weakness of Mrs. Morpher to imagine that "Clytie" was a consolation and model for Mliss. Following this fallacy, Mrs. Morpher threw Clytie at the head of Mliss when she was "bad," and set her up before the child for adoration in her penitential moments. It was not, therefore, surprising to the master to hear that Clytie was coming to school, obviously as a favour to the master and as an example for Mliss and others. For "Clytie" was quite a young lady. Inheriting her mother's physical peculiarities, and in obedience to the climatic laws of the Red Mountain region, she was an early bloomer. The youth of Smith's Pocket, to whom this kind of flower was rare, sighed for her in April and languished in May.

Enamoured swains haunted the schoolhouse at the hour of dismissal. A few were jealous of the master.

Perhaps it was this latter circumstance that opened the master's eyes to another. He could not help noticing that Clytie was romantic; that in school she required a great deal of attention; that her pens were uniformly bad and wanted fixing; that she usually accompanied the request with a certain expectation in her eye that was somewhat disproportionate to the quality of service she verbally required; that she sometimes allowed the curves of a round, plump white arm to rest on his when he was writing her copies; that she always blushed and flung back her blonde curls when she did so. I don't remember whether I have stated that the master was a young man,—it's of little consequence, however; he had been severely educated in the school in which Clytie was taking her first lesson, and, on the whole, withstood the flexible curves and factitious glance like the fine young Spartan that he was. Perhaps an insufficient quality of food may have tended to this asceticism. He generally avoided Clytie; but one evening, when she returned to the schoolhouse after something she had forgotten, and did not find it until the master walked home with her, I hear that he endeavoured to make himself particularly agreeable,—partly from the fact, I imagine, that his conduct was adding gall and bitterness to the already overcharged hearts of Clytemnestra's admirers.

The morning after this affecting episode Mliss did not come to school. Noon came, but not Mliss. Questioning Clytie on the subject, it appeared that they had left the school together, but the wilful Mliss had taken another road. The afternoon brought her not. In the evening he called on Mrs. Morpher, whose motherly heart was really alarmed. Mr. Morpher had spent all day in search of her, without discovering a trace that might lead to her discovery.

Aristides was summoned as a probable accomplice, but that equitable infant succeeded in impressing the household with his innocence. Mrs. Morpher entertained a vivid impression that the child would yet be found drowned in a ditch, or, what was almost as terrible, muddied and soiled beyond the redemption of soap and water. Sick at heart, the master returned to the schoolhouse. As he lit his lamp and seated himself at his desk, he found a note lying before him addressed to himself in Miss's handwriting. It seemed to be written on a leaf torn from some old memorandum-book, and, to prevent sacrilegious trifling, had been sealed with six broken wafers. Opening it almost tenderly, the master read as follows :—

“RESPECTED SIR,—When you read this, I am run away. Never to come back. *Never*, NEVER, NEVER. You can give my beads to Mary Jennings, and my Amerika's Pride [a highly coloured lithograph from a tobacco-box] to Sally Flanders. But don't you give anything to Clytie Morpher. Don't you dare to. Do you know what my opinion is of her : it is this, she is perfectly disgustin. That is all and no more at present from Yours respectfully,

“MELISSA SMITH.”

The master sat pondering on this strange epistle till the moon lifted its bright face above the distant hills and illuminated the trail that led to the schoolhouse, beaten quite hard with the coming and going of little feet. Then, more satisfied in mind, he tore the mis-tive into fragments and scattered them along the road.

At sunrise the next morning he was picking his way through the palm-like fern and thick underbrush of the pine forest, starting the hare from its form, and awakening a querulous protest from a few dissipated crows, who had

evidently been making a night of it, and so came to the wooded ridge where he had once found Mliss. There he found the prostrate pine and tasselled branches, but the throne was vacant. As he drew nearer, what might have been some frightened animal started through the crackling limbs. It ran up the tossed arms of the fallen monarch and sheltered itself in some friendly foliage. The master, reaching the old seat, found the nest still warm; looking up in the intertwining branches, he met the black eyes of the errant Mliss. They gazed at each other without speaking. She was first to break the silence.

"What do you want?" she asked curtly.

The master had decided on a course of action. "I want some crab-apples," he said humbly.

"Shan't have 'em! go away! Why don't you get 'em of Clytemnerestera?" (It seemed to be a relief to Mliss to express her contempt in additional syllables to that classical young woman's already long-drawn title.) "Oh, you wicked thing!"

"I am hungry, Lissy. I have eaten nothing since dinner yesterday. I am famished!" and the young man in a state of remarkable exhaustion leaned against the tree.

Melissa's heart was touched. In the bitter days of her gipsy life she had known the sensation he so artfully simulated. Overcome by his heartbroken tone, but not entirely divested of suspicion, she said—

"Dig under the tree near the roots, and you'll find lots; but mind you don't tell!" (for Mliss had *her* hoards as well as the rats and squirrels).

But the master, of course, was unable to find them, the effects of hunger probably blinding his senses. Mliss grew uneasy. At length she peered at him through the leaves in an elfish way, and questioned—

"If I come down and give you some, you'll promise you won't touch me?"

The master promised.

"Hope you'll die if you do?"

The master accepted instant dissolution as a forfeit. Miss slid down the tree. For a few moments nothing transpired but the munching of the pine-nuts. "Do you feel better?" she asked with some solicitude. The master confessed to a recuperated feeling, and then, gravely thanking her, proceeded to retrace his steps. As he expected, he had not gone far before she called him. He turned. She was standing there quite white, with tears in her widely opened orbs. The master felt that the right moment had come. Going up to her, he took both her hands, and, looking in her tearful eyes, said, gravely, "Lissy, do you remember the first evening you came to see me?"

Lissy remembered.

"You asked me if you might come to school, for you wanted to learn something and be better, and I said"—

"Come," responded the child, promptly.

"What would *you* say if the master now came to you and said that he was lonely without his little scholar, and that he wanted her to come and teach him to be better?"

The child hung her head for a few moments in silence. The master waited patiently. Tempted by the quiet, a hare ran close to the couple, and raising her bright eyes and velvet forepaws, sat and gazed at them. A squirrel ran half-way down the furrowed bark of the fallen tree, and there stopped.

"We are waiting, Lissy," said the master in a whisper, and the child smiled. Stirred by a passing breeze, the tree-tops rocked, and a long pencil of light stole through their interlaced boughs full on the doubting face and irresolute little figure. Suddenly she took the master's

hand in her quick way. What she said was scarcely audible, but the master, putting the black hair back from her forehead, kissed her ; and so, hand in hand, they passed out of the damp aisles and forest odours into the open sunlit road.

### CHAPTER III.

SOMEWHAT less spiteful in her intercourse with other scholars, Mliss still retained an offensive attitude in regard to Clytemnestra. Perhaps the jealous element was not entirely lulled in her passionate little breast. Perhaps it was only that the round curves and plump outline offered more extended pinching surface. But while such ebullitions were under the master's control, her enmity occasionally took a new and irrepressible form.

The master in his first estimate of the child's character could not conceive that she had ever possessed a doll. But the master, like many other professed readers of character, was safer in *à posteriori* than *à priori* reasoning. Mliss had a doll, but then it was emphatically Mliss's doll, —a smaller copy of herself. Its unhappy existence had been a secret discovered accidentally by Mrs. Morpher. It had been the old-time companion of Mliss's wanderings, and bore evident marks of suffering. Its original complexion was long since washed away by the weather and anointed by the slime of ditches. It looked very much as Mliss had in days past. Its one gown of faded stuff was dirty and ragged as hers had been. Mliss had never been known to apply to it any childish term of endearment. She never exhibited it in the presence of other children. It was put

severely to bed in a hollow tree near the schoolhouse, and only allowed exercise during Mliss's rambles. Fulfilling a stern duty to her doll, as she would to herself, it knew no luxuries.

Now Mrs. Morpher, obeying a commendable impulse, bought another doll and gave it to Mliss. The child received it gravely and curiously. The master, on looking at it one day, fancied he saw a slight resemblance in its round red cheeks and mild blue eyes to Clytemnestra. It became evident before long that Mliss had also noticed the same resemblance. Accordingly she hammered its waxen head on the rocks when she was alone, and sometimes dragged it with a string round its neck to and from school. At other times, setting it up on her desk, she made a pincushion of its patient and inoffensive body. Whether this was done in revenge of what she considered a second figurative obtrusion of Clytie's excellences upon her, or whether she had an intuitive appreciation of the rites of certain other heathens, and, indulging in that "fetish" ceremony, imagined that the original of her wax model would pine away and finally die, is a metaphysical question I shall not now consider.

In spite of these moral vagaries, the master could not help noticing in her different tasks the working of a quick, restless, and vigorous conception. She knew neither the hesitancy nor the doubts of childhood. Her answers in class were always slightly dashed with audacity. Of course she was not infallible. But her courage and daring in passing beyond her own depth and that of the floundering little swimmers around her, in their minds outweighed all errors of judgment. Children are not better than grown people in this respect, I fancy ; and whenever the little red hand flashed above her desk, there was a wondering silence,

and even the master was sometimes oppressed with a doubt of his own experience and judgment.

Nevertheless, certain attributes which at first amused and entertained his fancy began to afflict him with grave doubts. He could not but see that Mliss was revengeful, irreverent, and wilful. That there was but one better quality which pertained to her semi-savage disposition,—the faculty of physical fortitude and self-sacrifice ; and another, though not always an attribute of the noble savage,—truth. Mliss was both fearless and sincere ; perhaps in such a character the adjectives were synonymous.

The master had been doing some hard thinking on this subject, and had arrived at that conclusion quite common to all who think sincerely, that he was generally the slave of his own prejudices, when he determined to call on the Rev. McSnagley for advice. This decision was somewhat humiliating to his pride, as he and McSnagley were not friends. But he thought of Mliss and the evening of their first meeting ; and perhaps with a pardonable superstition that it was not chance alone that had guided her wilful feet to the schoolhouse, and perhaps with a complacent consciousness of the rare magnanimity of the act, he choked back his dislike and went to McSnagley.

The reverend gentleman was glad to see him. Moreover, he observed that the master was looking “peartish,” and hoped he had got over the “neuralgy” and “rheumatiz.” He himself had been troubled with a dumb “ager” since last Conference. But he had learned to “rastle and pray.”

Pausing a moment to enable the master to write his certain method of curing the dumb “ager” upon the book and volume of his brain, Mr. McSnagley proceeded to inquire after Sister Morpher. “She is an adornment to Christewanity, and has a likely growin’ young family,” added Mr.

McSnagley; "and there's that mannerly young gal,—so well behaved,—Miss Clytie." In fact, Clytie's perfections seemed to affect him to such an extent that he dwelt for several minutes upon them. The master was doubly embarrassed. In the first place, there was an enforced contrast with poor Mliss in all this praise of Clytie. Secondly, there was something unpleasantly confidential in his tone of speaking of Mrs. Morpher's earliest born. So that the master, after a few futile efforts to say something natural, found it convenient to recall another engagement, and left without asking the information required, but in his after reflections somewhat unjustly giving the Rev. Mr. McSnagley the full benefit of having refused it.

Perhaps this rebuff placed the master and pupil once more in the close communion of old. The child seemed to notice the change in the master's manner, which had of late been constrained, and in one of their long postprandial walks she stopped suddenly, and mounting a stump, looked full in his face with big, searching eyes. "You ain't mad?" said she, with an interrogative shake of the black braids. "No." "Nor bothered?" "No." "Nor hungry?" (Hunger was to Mliss a sickness that might attack a person at any moment.) "No." "Nor thinking of her?" "Of whom, Lissy?" "That white girl." (This was the latest epithet invented by Mliss, who was a very dark brunette, to express Clytemnestra.) "No." "Upon your word?" (A substitute for "Hope you'll die?" proposed by the master.) "Yes." "And sacred honour?" "Yes." Then Mliss gave him a fierce little kiss, and, hopping down, fluttered off. For two or three days after that she condescended to appear more like other children, and be, as she expressed it, "good."

Two years had passed since the master's advent at Smith's Pocket, and as his salary was not large, and the

prospects of Smith's Pocket eventually becoming the capital of the State not entirely definite, he contemplated a change. He had informed the school trustees privately of his intentions, but, educated young men of unblemished moral character being scarce at that time, he consented to continue his school term through the winter to early spring. None else knew of his intention except his one friend, a Dr. Duchesne, a young Creole physician, known to the people of Wingdam as "Duchesny." He never mentioned it to Mrs. Morpher, Clytie, or any of his scholars. His reticence was partly the result of a constitutional indisposition to fuss, partly a desire to be spared the questions and surmises of vulgar curiosity, and partly that he never really believed he was going to do anything before it was done.

He did not like to think of Mliss. It was a selfish instinct, perhaps, which made him try to fancy his feeling for the child was foolish, romantic, and unpractical. He even tried to imagine that she would do better under the control of an older and sterner teacher. Then she was nearly eleven, and in a few years, by the rules of Red Mountain, would be a woman. He had done his duty. After Smith's death he addressed letters to Smith's relatives, and received one answer from a sister of Melissa's mother. Thanking the master, she stated her intention of leaving the Atlantic States for California with her husband in a few months. This was a slight superstructure for the airy castle which the master pictured for Mliss's home, but it was easy to fancy that some loving, sympathetic woman, with the claims of kindred, might better guide her wayward nature. Yet, when the master had read the letter, Mliss listened to it carelessly, received it submissively, and afterwards cut figures out of it with her scissors, supposed to represent Clytemnestra, labelled "the white girl," to prevent mistakes, and impaled **them** upon the outer walls of the schoolhouse.

When the summer was about spent, and the last harvest had been gathered in the valleys, the master bethought him of gathering in a few ripened shoots of the young idea, and of having his harvest-home, or examination. So the savans and professionals of Smith's Pocket were gathered to witness that time-honoured custom of placing timid children in a constrained position, and bullying them as in a witness-box. As usual in such cases, the most audacious and self-possessed were the lucky recipients of the honours. The reader will imagine that in the present instance Mliss and Clytie were pre-eminent, and divided public attention : Mliss with her clearness of material perception and self-reliance, Clytie with her placid self-esteem and saint-like correctness of deportment. The other little ones were timid and blundering. Mliss's readiness and brilliancy, of course, captivated the greatest number and provoked the greatest applause. Mliss's antecedents had unconsciously awakened the strongest sympathies of a class whose athletic forms were ranged against the walls, or whose handsome bearded faces looked in at the windows. But Mliss's popularity was overthrown by an unexpected circumstance.

McSnagley had invited himself, and had been going through the pleasing entertainment of frightening the more timid pupils by the vaguest and most ambiguous questions delivered in an impressive funereal tone ; and Mliss had soared into astronomy, and was tracking the course of our spotted ball through space, and keeping time with the music of the spheres, and defining the tethered orbits of the planets, when McSnagley impressively arose. "Meelissy ! ye were speaking of the revolutions of this yere yearth and the move-*ments* of the sun, and I think ye said it had been a doing of it since the creashun, eh ?" Mliss nodded a scornful affirmative. "Well, war that the truth ?" said McSnagley, folding his arms. "Yes," said Mliss, shutting

up her little red lips tightly. The handsome outlines at the windows peered further in the schoolroom, and a saintly Raphael face, with blonde beard and soft blue eyes, belonging to the biggest scamp in the diggings, turned toward the child and whispered, "Stick to it, Mliss!" The reverend gentleman heaved a deep sigh, and cast a compassionate glance at the master, then at the children, and then rested his look on Clytie. That young woman softly elevated her round white arm. Its seductive curves were enhanced by a gorgeous and massive specimen bracelet, the gift of one of her humblest worshippers, worn in honour of the occasion. There was a momentary silence. Clytie's round cheeks were very pink and soft. Clytie's big eyes were very bright and blue. Clytie's low-necked white book-muslin rested softly on Clytie's white, plump shoulders. Clytie looked at the master, and the master nodded. Then Clytie spoke softly:—

"Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and it obeyed him!" There was a low hum of applause in the schoolroom, a triumphant expression on McSnagley's face, a grave shadow on the master's, and a comical look of disappointment reflected from the windows. Mliss skimmed rapidly over her astronomy, and then shut the book with a loud snap. A groan burst from McSnagley, an expression of astonishment from the schoolroom, a yell from the windows as Mliss brought her red fist down on the desk with the emphatic declaration—

"It's a d—n lie. I don't believe it!"

## CHAPTER IV.

THE long wet season had drawn near its close. Signs of spring were visible in the swelling buds and rushing torrents. The pine forests exhaled the fresher spicery. The azaleas were already budding, the ceanothus getting ready its lilac livery for spring. On the green upland which climbed Red Mountain at its southern aspect the long spike of the monk's-hood shot up from its broad-leaved stool, and once more shook its dark-blue bells. Again the billow above Smith's grave was soft and green, its crest just tossed with the foam of daisies and buttercups. The little graveyard had gathered a few new dwellers in the past year, and the mounds were placed two by two by the little paling until they reached Smith's grave, and there there was but one. General superstition had shunned it, and the plot beside Smith was vacant.

There had been several placards posted about the town, intimating that, at a certain period, a celebrated dramatic company would perform, for a few days, a series of "side-splitting" and "screaming" farces; that, alternating pleasantly with this, there would be some melodrama and a grand divertisement, which would include singing, dancing, &c. These announcements occasioned a great fluttering among the little folk, and were the theme of much excitement and great speculation among the master's scholars. The master had promised Mliss, to whom this sort of thing was sacred and rare, that she should go, and on that momentous evening the master and Mliss "assisted."

The performance was the prevalent style of heavy mediocrity; the melodrama was not bad enough to laugh at nor good enough to excite. But the master, turning wearily to

the child, was astonished, and felt something like self-accusation in noticing the peculiar effect upon her excitable nature. The red blood flushed in her cheeks at each stroke of her panting little heart. Her small passionate lips were slightly parted to give vent to her hurried breath. Her widely opened lids threw up and arched her black eyebrows. She did not laugh at the dismal comicalities of the funny man, for *Miss* seldom laughed. Nor was she discreetly affected to the delicate extremes of the corner of a white handkerchief, as was the tender-hearted "*Clytie*," who was talking with her "*feller*" and ogling the master at the same moment. But when the performance was over, and the green curtain fell on the little stage, *Miss* drew a long deep breath, and turned to the master's grave face with a half-apologetic smile and wearied gesture. Then she said, "Now take me home!" and dropped the lids of her black eyes, as if to dwell once more in fancy on the mimic stage.

On their way to Mrs. Morpher's the master thought proper to ridicule the whole performance. Now he shouldn't wonder if *Miss* thought that the young lady who acted so beautifully was really in earnest, and in love with the gentleman who wore such fine clothes. Well, if she were in love with him, it was a very unfortunate thing! "Why?" said *Miss*, with an upward sweep of the drooping lid. "Oh! well, he couldn't support his wife at his present salary, and pay so much a week for his fine clothes, and then they wouldn't receive as much wages if they were married as if they were merely lovers,—that is," added the master, "if they are not already married to somebody else; but I think the husband of the pretty young countess takes the tickets at the door, or pulls up the curtain, or snuffs the candles, or does something equally refined and elegant. As to the young man with nice clothes, which are really nice now, and must cost at least two and a half or three dollars, not

to speak of that mantle of red drugget, which I happen to know the price of, for I bought some of it for my room once,—as to this young man, Lissy, he is a pretty good fellow, and if he does drink occasionally, I don't think people ought to take advantage of it and give him black eyes and throw him in the mud. Do you? I am sure he might owe me two dollars and a half a long time before I would throw it up in his face, as the fellow did the other night at Wingdam."

Mliss had taken his hand in both of hers and was trying to look in his eyes, which the young man kept as resolutely averted. Mliss had a faint idea of irony, indulging herself sometimes in a species of sardonic humour, which was equally visible in her actions and speech. But the young man continued in this strain until they had reached Mrs. Morpher's, and he had deposited Mliss in her maternal charge. Waiving the invitation of Mrs. Morpher to refreshment and rest, and shading his eyes with his hand to keep out the blue-eyed Clytemnestra's siren glances, he excused himself and went home.

For two or three days after the advent of the dramatic company, Mliss was late at school, and the master's usual Friday afternoon ramble was for once omitted, owing to the absence of his trustworthy guide. As he was putting away his books and preparing to leave the schoolhouse, a small voice piped at his side, "Please, sir!" The master turned, and there stood Aristides Morpher.

"Well, my little man," said the master impatiently, "what is it?—quick!"

"Please, sir, me and 'Kerg' thinks that Mliss is going to run away agin."

"What's that, sir?" said the master, with that unjust testiness with which we always receive disagreeable news.

"Why, sir, she don't stay home any more, and 'Kerg'

and me see her talking with one of those actor fellers, and she's with him now; and please, sir, yesterday she told 'Kerg' and me she could make a speech as well as Miss Cellerstina Montmoressy, and she spouted right off by heart," and the little fellow paused in a collapsed condition.

"What actor?" asked the master.

"Him as wears the shiny hat. And hair. And gold pin. And gold chain," said the just Aristides, putting periods for commas to eke out his breath.

The master put on his gloves and hat, feeling an unpleasant tightness in his chest and thorax, and walked out in the road. Aristides trotted along by his side, endeavouring to keep pace with his short legs to the master's strides, when the master stopped suddenly, and Aristides bumped up against him. "Where were they talking?" asked the master, as if continuing the conversation.

"At the Arcade," said Aristides.

When they reached the main street the master paused. "Run down home," said he to the boy. "If Miss is there, come to the Arcade and tell me. If she isn't there, stay home; run!" And off trotted the short-legged Aristides.

The Arcade was just across the way,—a long, rambling building containing a bar-room, billiard-room, and restaurant. As the young man crossed the plaza he noticed that two or three of the passers-by turned and looked after him. He looked at his clothes, took out his handkerchief and wiped his face before he entered the bar-room. It contained the usual number of loungers, who stared at him as he entered. One of them looked at him so fixedly and with such a strange expression that the master stopped and looked again, and then saw it was only his own reflection in a large mirror. This made the master think that perhaps he was a little excited, and so he took up a copy of the *Red Mountain*

*Banner* from one of the tables, and tried to recover his composure by reading the column of advertisements.

He then walked through the bar-room, through the restaurant, and into the billiard-room. The child was not there. In the latter apartment a person was standing by one of the tables with a broad-brimmed glazed hat on his head. The master recognised him as the agent of the dramatic company; he had taken a dislike to him at their first meeting, from the peculiar fashion of wearing his beard and hair. Satisfied that the object of his search was not there, he turned to the man with the glazed hat. He had noticed the master, but tried that common trick of unconsciousness, in which vulgar natures always fail. Balancing a billiard-cue in his hand, he pretended to play with a ball in the centre of the table. The master stood opposite to him until he raised his eyes; when their glances met, the master walked up to him.

He had intended to avoid a scene or quarrel, but when he began to speak, something kept rising in his throat and retarded his utterance, and his own voice frightened him, it sounded so distant, low, and resonant.

"I understand," he began, "that Melissa Smith, an orphan, and one of my scholars, has talked with you about adopting your profession. Is that so?"

The man with the glazed hat leaned over the table, and made an imaginary shot, that sent the ball spinning round the cushions. Then walking round the table he recovered the ball and placed it upon the spot. This duty discharged, getting ready for another shot, he said—

"S'pose she has?"

The master choked up again, but, squeezing the cushion of the table in his gloved hand, he went on—

"If you are a gentleman, I have only to tell you that I am her guardian, and responsible for her career. You

know as well as I do the kind of life you offer her. As you may learn of any one here, I have already brought her out of an existence worse than death,—out of the streets and the contamination of vice. I am trying to do so again. Let us talk like men. She has neither father, mother, sister, or brother. Are you seeking to give her an equivalent for these?"

The man with the glazed hat examined the point of his cue, and then looked around for somebody to enjoy the joke with him.

"I know that she is a strange, wilful girl," continued the master, "but she is better than she was. I believe that I have some influence over her still. I beg and hope, therefore, that you will take no further steps in this matter, but as a man, as a gentleman, leave her to me. I am willing"—But here something rose again in the master's throat, and the sentence remained unfinished.

The man with the glazed hat, mistaking the master's silence, raised his head with a coarse, brutal laugh, and said in a loud voice—

"Want her yourself, do you? That cock won't fight here, young man!"

The insult was more in the tone than the words, more in the glance than tone, and more in the man's instinctive nature than all these. The best appreciable rhetoric to this kind of animal is a blow. The master felt this, and, with his pent up, nervous energy finding expression in the one act, he struck the brute full in his grinning face. The blow sent the glazed hat one way and the cue another, and tore the glove and skin from the master's hand from knuckle to joint. It opened up the corners of the fellow's mouth, and spoilt the peculiar shape of his beard for some time to come.

There was a shout, an imprecation, a scuffle, and the

trampling of many feet. Then the crowd parted right and left, and two sharp quick reports followed each other in rapid succession. Then they closed again about his opponent, and the master was standing alone. He remembered picking bits of burning wadding from his coat-sleeve with his left hand. Some one was holding his other hand. Looking at it, he saw it was still bleeding from the blow, but his fingers were clenched around the handle of a glittering knife. He could not remember when or how he got it.

The man who was holding his hand was Mr. Morpher. He hurried the master to the door, but the master held back, and tried to tell him as well as he could with his parched throat about "Mliss." "It's all right, my boy," said Mr. Morpher. "She's home!" And they passed out into the street together. As they walked along Mr. Morpher said that Mliss had come running into the house a few moments before, and had dragged him out, saying that somebody was trying to kill the master at the Arcade. Wishing to be alone, the master promised Mr. Morpher that he would not seek the agent again that night, and parted from him, taking the road toward the schoolhouse. He was surprised on nearing it to find the door open,—still more surprised to find Mliss sitting there.

The master's nature, as I have hinted before, had, like most sensitive organisations, a selfish basis. The brutal taunt thrown out by his late adversary still rankled in his heart. It was possible, he thought, that such a construction might be put upon his affection for the child, which at best was foolish and Quixotic. Besides, had she not voluntarily abnegated his authority and affection? And what had everybody else said about her? Why should he alone combat the opinion of all, and be at last obliged tacitly to confess the truth of all they had predicted? And he

had been a participant in a low bar-room fight with a common boor, and risked his life, to prove what? What had he proved? Nothing! What would the people say? What would his friends say? What would McSnagley say?

In his self-accusation the last person he should have wished to meet was Mliss. He entered the door, and, going up to his desk, told the child, in a few cold words, that he was busy and wished to be alone. As she rose he took her vacant seat, and, sitting down, buried his head in his hands. When he looked up again she was still standing there. She was looking at his face with an anxious expression.

"Did you kill him?" she asked.

"No!" said the master.

"That's what I gave you the knife for!" said the child, quickly.

"Gave me the knife?" repeated the master, in bewilderment.

"Yes, gave you the knife. I was there under the bar. Saw you hit him. Saw you both fall. He dropped his old knife. I gave it to you. Why didn't you stick him?" said Mliss rapidly, with an expressive twinkle of the black eyes and a gesture of the little red hand.

The master could only look his astonishment.

"Yes," said Mliss. "If you'd asked me, I'd told you I was off with the playactors. Why was I off with the playactors? Because you wouldn't tell me you was going away. I knew it. I heard you tell the Doctor so. I wasn't a goin' to stay here alone with those Morphers. I'd rather die first."

With a dramatic gesture which was perfectly consistent with her character, she drew from her bosom a few limp green leaves, and, holding them out at arm's-length, said in

her quick vivid way, and in the queer pronunciation of her old life, which she fell into when unduly excited—

“That’s the poison plant you said would kill me. I’ll go with the playactors, or I’ll eat this and die here. I don’t care which. I won’t stay here, where they hate and despise me! Neither would you let me, if you didn’t hate and despise me too!”

The passionate little breast heaved, and two big tears peeped over the edge of Mliss’s eyelids, but she whisked them away with the corner of her apron as if they had been wasps.

“If you lock me up in jail,” said Mliss fiercely, “to keep me from the playactors, I’ll poison myself. Father killed himself,—why shouldn’t I? You said a mouthful of that root would kill me, and I always carry it here,” and she struck her breast with her clenched fist.

The master thought of the vacant plot beside Smith’s grave, and of the passionate little figure before him. Seizing her hands in his and looking full into her truthful eyes, he said—

“Lissy, will you go with *me*?”

The child put her arms around his neck, and said joyfully, “Yes.”

“But now—to-night?”

“To-night!”

And, hand in hand, they passed into the road,—the narrow road that had once brought her weary feet to the master’s door, and which it seemed she should not tread again alone. The stars glittered brightly above them. For good or ill the lesson had been learned, and behind them the school of Red Mountain closed upon them for ever.

## High-Water Mark.

WHEN the tide was out on the Dedlow Marsh, its extended dreariness was patent. Its spongy, low-lying surface, sluggish, inky pools, and tortuous sloughs, twisting their slimy way, eel like, toward the open bay, were all hard facts. So were the few green tussocks, with their scant blades, their amphibious flavour, and unpleasant dampness. And if you chose to indulge your fancy,—although the flat monotony of the Dedlow Marsh was not inspiring,—the wavy line of scattered drift gave an unpleasant consciousness of the spent waters, and made the dead certainty of the returning tide a gloomy reflection, which no present sunshine could dissipate. The greener meadow-land seemed oppressed with this idea, and made no positive attempt at vegetation until the work of reclamation should be complete. In the bitter fruit of the low cranberry bushes one might fancy he detected a naturally sweet disposition curdled and soured by an injudicious course of too much regular cold water.

The vocal expression of the Dedlow Marsh was also melancholy and depressing. The sepulchral boom of the bittern, the shriek of the curlew, the scream of passing brent, the wrangling of quarrelsome teal, the sharp querulous protest of the startled crane, and syllabled complaint of the “kildeer” plover were beyond the power of written expression. Nor was the aspect of these mournful fowls at all

cheerful and inspiring. Certainly not the blue heron standing midleg deep in the water, obviously catching cold in a reckless disregard of wet feet and consequences; nor the mournful curlew, the dejected plover, or the low-spirited snipe, who saw fit to join him in his suicidal contemplation; nor the impassive kingfisher—an ornithological Marius—reviewing the desolate expanse; nor the black raven that went to and fro over the face of the marsh continually, but evidently couldn't make up his mind whether the waters had subsided, and felt low-spirited in the reflection that, after all this trouble, he wouldn't be able to give a definite answer. On the contrary, it was evident at a glance that the dreary expanse of Dedlow Marsh told unpleasantly on the birds, and that the season of migration was looked forward to with a feeling of relief and satisfaction by the full grown, and of extravagant anticipation by the callow brood. But if Dedlow Marsh was cheerless at the slack of the low tide, you should have seen it when the tide was strong and full. When the damp air blew chilly over the cold glittering expanse, and came to the faces of those who looked seaward like another tide; when a steel-like glint marked the low hollows and the sinuous line of slough; when the great shell-incrusted trunks of fallen trees arose again, and went forth on their dreary purposeless wanderings, drifting hither and thither, but getting no farther toward any goal at the falling tide or the day's decline than the cursed Hebrew in the legend; when the glossy ducks swung silently, making neither ripple nor furrow on the shimmering surface; when the fog came in with the tide and shut out the blue above, even as the green below had been obliterated; when boatmen, lost in that fog, paddling about in a hopeless way, started at what seemed the brushing of mermen's fingers on the boat's keel, or shrank from the tufts of grass spreading around like the

floating hair of a corpse, and knew by these signs that they were lost upon Dedlow Marsh, and must make a night of it, and a gloomy one at that,—then you might know something of Dedlow Marsh at high water.

Let me recall a story connected with this latter view which never failed to recur to my mind in my long gunning excursions upon Dedlow Marsh. Although the event was briefly recorded in the county paper, I had the story, in all its eloquent detail, from the lips of the principal actor. I cannot hope to catch the varying emphasis and peculiar colouring of feminine delineation, for my narrator was a woman ; but I'll try to give at least its substance.

She lived midway of the great slough of Dedlow Marsh and a good-sized river, which debouched four miles beyond into an estuary formed by the Pacific Ocean, on the long sandy peninsula which constituted the south-western boundary of a noble bay. The house in which she lived was a small frame cabin raised from the marsh a few feet by stout piles, and was three miles distant from the settlements upon the river. Her husband was a logger,—a profitable business in a county where the principal occupation was the manufacture of lumber.

It was the season of early spring, when her husband left on the ebb of a high tide with a raft of logs for the usual transportation to the lower end of the bay. As she stood by the door of the little cabin when the voyagers departed, she noticed a cold look in the south-eastern sky, and she remembered hearing her husband say to his companions that they must endeavour to complete their voyage before the coming of the south-westerly gale which he saw brewing. And that night it began to storm and blow harder than she had ever before experienced, and some great trees fell in the forest by the river, and the house rocked like her baby's cradle.

But however the storm might roar about the little cabin, she knew that one she trusted had driven bolt and bar with his own strong hand, and that had he feared for her he would not have left her. This, and her domestic duties, and the care of her little sickly baby, helped to keep her mind from dwelling on the weather, except, of course, to hope that he was safely harboured with the logs at Utopia in the dreary distance. But she noticed that day, when she went out to feed the chickens and look after the cow, that the tide was up to the little fence of their garden patch, and the roar of the surf on the south beach, though miles away, she could hear distinctly. And she began to think that she would like to have some one to talk with about matters, and she believed that if it had not been so far and so stormy, and the trail so impassable, she would have taken the baby and have gone over to Ryckman's, her nearest neighbour. But then, you see, he might have returned in the storm, all wet, with no one to see to him ; and it was a long exposure for baby, who was croupy and ailing.

But that night, she never could tell why, she didn't feel like sleeping or even lying down. The storm had somewhat abated, but she still "sat and sat," and even tried to read. I don't know whether it was a Bible or some profane magazine that this poor woman read, but most probably the latter, for the words all ran together and made such sad nonsense that she was forced at last to put the book down and turn to that dearer volume which lay before her in the cradle, with its white initial leaf as yet unsoiled, and try to look forward to its mysterious future. And, rocking the cradle, she thought of everything and everybody, but still was wide awake as ever.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when she at last lay down in her clothes. How long she slept she could not remem-

ber, but she awoke with a dreadful choking in her throat, and found herself standing, trembling all over, in the middle of the room, with her baby clasped to her breast, and she was "saying something." The baby cried and sobbed, and she walked up and down trying to hush it, when she heard a scratching at the door. She opened it fearfully, and was glad to see it was only old Pete, their dog, who crawled, dripping with water, into the room. She would like to have looked out, not in the faint hope of her husband's coming, but to see how things looked; but the wind shook the door so savagely that she could hardly hold it. Then she sat down a little while, and then walked up and down a little while, and then she lay down again a little while. Lying close by the wall of the little cabin, she thought she heard once or twice something scrape slowly against the clapboards, like the scraping of branches. Then there was a little gurgling sound, "like the baby made when it was swallowing;" then something went "click-click" and "cluck-cluck," so that she sat up in bed. When she did so she was attracted by something else that seemed creeping from the back door towards the centre of the room. It wasn't much wider than her little finger, but soon it swelled to the width of her hand, and began spreading all over the floor. It was water.

She ran to the front door and threw it wide open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the back door and threw it open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the side window, and throwing that open, she saw nothing but water. Then she remembered hearing her husband once say that there was no danger in the tide, for that fell regularly, and people could calculate on it, and that he would rather live near the bay than the river, whose banks might overflow at any time. But was it the tide?

So she ran again to the back door, and threw out a stick of wood. It drifted away towards the bay. She scooped up some of the water and put it eagerly to her lips. It was fresh and sweet. It was the river, and not the tide!

It was then—O God be praised for His goodness! she did neither faint nor fall; it was then—blessed be the Saviour, for it was His merciful hand that touched and strengthened her in this awful moment—that fear dropped from her like a garment, and her trembling ceased. It was then and thereafter that she never lost her self-command, through all the trials of that gloomy night.

She drew the bedstead towards the middle of the room, and placed a table upon it, and on that she put the cradle. The water on the floor was already over her ankles, and the house once or twice moved so perceptibly, and seemed to be racked so, that the closet doors all flew open. Then she heard the same rasping and thumping against the wall, and, looking out, saw that a large uprooted tree, which had lain near the road at the upper end of the pasture, had floated down to the house. Luckily its long roots dragged in the soil and kept it from moving as rapidly as the current, for had it struck the house in its full career, even the strong nails and bolts in the piles could not have withstood the shock. The hound had leaped upon its knotty surface, and crouched near the roots shivering and whining. A ray of hope flashed across her mind. She drew a heavy blanket from the bed, and, wrapping it about the babe, waded in the deepening waters to the door. As the tree swung again, broadside on, making the little cabin creak and tremble, she leaped on to its trunk. By God's mercy she succeeded in obtaining a footing on its slippery surface, and twining an arm about

its roots, she held in the other her moaning child. Then something cracked near the front porch, and the whole front of the house she had just quitted fell forward,—just as cattle fall on their knees before they lie down,—and at the same moment the great redwood tree swung round and drifted away with its living cargo into the black night.

For all the excitement and danger, for all her soothing of her crying babe, for all the whistling of the wind, for all the uncertainty of her situation, she still turned to look at the deserted and water-swept cabin. She remembered even then, and she wonders how foolish she was to think of it at that time, that she wished she had put on another dress and the baby's best clothes; and she kept praying that the house would be spared so that he, when he returned, would have something to come to, and it wouldn't be quite so desolate, and—how could he ever know what had become of her and baby? And at the thought she grew sick and faint. But she had something else to do besides worrying, for whenever the long roots of her ark struck an obstacle, the whole trunk made half a revolution, and twice dipped her in the black water. The hound, who kept distracting her by running up and down the tree and howling, at last fell off at one of these collisions. He swam for some time beside her, and she tried to get the poor beast upon the tree, but he “acted silly” and wild, and at last she lost sight of him for ever. Then she and her baby were left alone. The light which had burned for a few minutes in the deserted cabin was quenched suddenly. She could not then tell whither she was drifting. The outline of the white dunes on the peninsula showed dimly ahead, and she judged the tree was moving in a line with the river. It must be about slack water, and she had probably reached the eddy formed by the confluence of the

tide and the overflowing waters of the river. Unless the tide fell soon, there was present danger of her drifting to its channel, and being carried out to sea or crushed in the floating drift. That peril averted, if she were carried out on the ebb toward the bay, she might hope to strike one of the wooded promontories of the peninsula, and rest till daylight. Sometimes she thought she heard voices and shouts from the river, and the bellowing of cattle and bleating of sheep. Then again it was only the ringing in her ears and throbbing of her heart. She found at about this time that she was so chilled and stiffened in her cramped position that she could scarcely move, and the baby cried so when she put it to her breast that she noticed the milk refused to flow; and she was so frightened at that, that she put her head under her shawl, and for the first time cried bitterly.

When she raised her head again, the boom of the surf was behind her, and she knew that her ark had again swung round. She dipped up the water to cool her parched throat, and found that it was salt as her tears. There was a relief, though, for by this sign she knew that she was drifting with the tide. It was then the wind went down, and the great and awful silence oppressed her. There was scarcely a ripple against the furrowed sides of the great trunk on which she rested, and around her all was black gloom and quiet. She spoke to the baby just to hear herself speak, and to know that she had not lost her voice. She thought then,—it was queer, but she could not help thinking it,—how awful must have been the night when the great ship swung over the Asiatic peak, and the sounds of creation were blotted out from the world. She thought, too, of mariners clinging to spars, and of poor women who were lashed to rafts and beaten to death by the cruel sea. She tried to thank God that she was thus spared, and

lifted her eyes from the baby who had fallen into a fretful sleep. Suddenly, away to the southward, a great light lifted itself out of the gloom, and flashed and flickered, and flickered and flashed again. Her heart fluttered quickly against the baby's cold cheek. It was the lighthouse at the entrance of the bay. As she was yet wondering, the tree suddenly rolled a little, dragged a little, and then seemed to lie quiet and still. She put out her hand and the current gurgled against it. The tree was aground, and, by the position of the light and the noise of the surf, aground upon the Dedlow Marsh.

Had it not been for her baby, who was ailing and croupy, had it not been for the sudden drying up of that sensitive fountain, she would have felt safe and relieved. Perhaps it was this which tended to make all her impressions mournful and gloomy. As the tide rapidly fell, a great flock of black brent fluttered by her, screaming and crying. Then the plover flew up and piped mournfully as they wheeled around the trunk, and at last fearlessly lit upon it like a grey cloud. Then the heron flew over and around her shrieking and protesting, and at last dropped its gaunt legs only a few yards from her. But, strangest of ail, a pretty white bird, larger than a dove,—like a pelican, but not a pelican,—circled around and around her. At last it lit upon a rootlet of the tree quite over her shoulder. She put out her hand and stroked its beautiful white neck, and it never appeared to move. It stayed there so long that she thought she would lift up the baby to see it and try to attract her attention. But when she did so, the child was so chilled and cold, and had such a blue look under the little lashes which it didn't raise at all, that she screamed aloud, and the bird flew away, and she fainted.

Well, that was the worst of it, and perhaps it was not so much, after all, to any but herself. For when she recovered

her senses it was bright sunlight and dead low water. There was a confused noise of guttural voices about her, and an old squaw, singing an Indian "hushaby," and rocking herself from side to side before a fire built on the marsh, before which she, the recovered wife and mother, lay weak and weary. Her first thought was for her baby, and she was about to speak, when a young squaw, who must have been a mother herself, fathomed her thought and brought her the "mowitch," pale but living, in such a queer little willow cradle, all bound up, just like the squaw's own young one, that she laughed and cried together, and the young squaw and the old squaw showed their big white teeth and glinted their black eyes and said, "Plenty get well, skeena mowitch," "Wagee man come plenty soon," and she could have kissed their brown faces in her joy. And then she found that they had been gathering berries on the marsh in their queer, comical baskets, and saw the skirt of her gown fluttering on the tree from afar, and the old squaw couldn't resist the temptation of procuring a new garment, and came down and discovered the "wagee" woman and child. And of course she gave the garment to the old squaw, as you may imagine, and when *he* came at last and rushed up to her, looking about ten years older in his anxiety, she felt so faint again that they had to carry her to the canoe. For, you see, he knew nothing about the flood until he met the Indians at Utopia, and knew by the signs that the poor woman was his wife. And at the next high tide he towed the tree away back home, although it wasn't worth the trouble, and built another house, using the old tree for the foundation and props, and called it after her, "Mary's Ark!" But you may guess the next house was built above high-water mark. And that's all.

Not much, perhaps, considering the malevolent capacity

of the Dedlow Marsh. But you must tramp over it at low water, or paddle over it at high tide, or get lost upon it once or twice in the fog, as I have, to understand properly Mary's adventure, or to appreciate duly the blessings of living beyond high-water mark.

## A Lonely Ride.

As I stepped into the Slumgullion stage I saw that it was a dark night, a lonely road, and that I was the only passenger. Let me assure the reader that I have no ulterior design in making this assertion. A long course of light reading has forewarned me what every experienced intelligence must confidently look for from such a statement. The storyteller who wilfully tempts fate by such obvious beginnings, who is to the expectant reader in danger of being robbed or half-murdered, or frightened by an escaped lunatic, or introduced to his lady-love for the first time, deserves to be detected. I am relieved to say that none of these things occurred to me. The road from Wingdam to Slumgullion knew no other banditti than the regularly licensed hotelkeepers; lunatics had not yet reached such depth of imbecility as to ride of their own free will in Californian stages; and my Laura, amiable and long-suffering as she always is, could not, I fear, have borne up against these depressing circumstances long enough to have made the slightest impression on me.

I stood with my shawl and carpet-bag in hand, gazing doubtingly on the vehicle. Even in the darkness the red dust of Wingdam was visible on its roof and sides, and the red slime of Slumgullion clung tenaciously to its wheels. I opened the door; the stage creaked uneasily, and in the gloomy abyss the swaying straps beckoned me, like ghostly hands, to come in now, and have my sufferings out at once.

I must not omit to mention the occurrence of a circumstance which struck me as appalling and mysterious. A lounge on the steps of the hotel, whom I had reason to suppose was not in any way connected with the stage company, gravely descended, and, walking toward the conveyance, tried the handle of the door, opened it, expectorated in the carriage, and returned to the hotel with a serious demeanour. Hardly had he resumed his position, when another individual, equally disinterested, impassively walked down the steps, proceeded to the back of the stage, lifted it, expectorated carefully on the axle, and returned slowly and pensively to the hotel. A third spectator wearily disengaged himself from one of the Ionic columns of the portico and walked to the box, remained for a moment in serious and expectorative contemplation of the boot, and then returned to his column. There was something so weird in this baptism that I grew quite nervous.

Perhaps I was out of spirits. A number of infinitesimal annoyances, winding up with the resolute persistency of the clerk at the stage-office to enter my name misspelt on the waybill, had not predisposed me to cheerfulness. The inmates of the Eureka House, from a social view-point, were not attractive. There was the prevailing opinion—so common to many honest people—that a serious style of deportment and conduct toward a stranger indicates high gentility and elevated station. Obeying this principle, all hilarity ceased on my entrance to supper, and general remark merged into the safer and uncompromising chronicle of several bad cases of diphtheria, then epidemic at Wingdam. When I left the dining-room, with an odd feeling that I had been supping exclusively on mustard and tea leaves, I stopped a moment at the parlour door. A piano, harmoniously related to the dinner-bell, tinkled responsive to a diffident and uncertain touch. On the white wall the shadow

of an old and sharp profile was bending over several symmetrical and shadowy curls. "I sez to Mariar, Mariar, sez I, 'Praise to the face is open disgrace.'" I heard no more. Dreading some susceptibility to sincere expression on the subject of female loveliness, I walked away, checking the compliment that otherwise might have risen unbidden to my lips, and have brought shame and sorrow to the household.

It was with the memory of these experiences resting heavily upon me that I stood hesitatingly before the stage door. The driver, about to mount, was for a moment illuminated by the open door of the hotel. He had the wearied look which was the distinguishing expression of Wingdam. Satisfied that I was properly way-billed and receipted for, he took no further notice of me. I looked longingly at the box-seat, but he did not respond to the appeal. I flung my carpet-bag into the chasm, dived recklessly after it, and—before I was fairly seated—with a great sigh, a creaking of unwilling springs, complaining bolts, and harshly expostulating axle, we moved away. Rather the hotel door slipped behind, the sound of the piano sank to rest, and the night and its shadows moved solemnly upon us.

To say it was dark expressed but faintly the pitchy obscurity that encompassed the vehicle. The roadside trees were scarcely distinguishable as deeper masses of shadow; I knew them only by the peculiar sodden odour that from time to time sluggishly flowed in at the open window as we rolled by. We proceeded slowly; so leisurely that, leaning from the carriage, I more than once detected the fragrant sigh of some astonished cow, whose ruminating repose upon the highway we had ruthlessly disturbed. But in the darkness our progress, more the guidance of some mysterious instinct than any apparent volition of our own, gave an indefinable charm of security to our journey, that a

moment's hesitation or indecision on the part of the driver would have destroyed.

I had indulged a hope that in the empty vehicle I might obtain that rest so often denied me in its crowded condition. It was a weak delusion. When I stretched out my limbs it was only to find that the ordinary conveniences for making several people distinctly uncomfortable were distributed throughout my individual frame. At last, resting my arms on the straps, by dint of much gymnastic effort I became sufficiently composed to be aware of a more refined species of torture. The springs of the stage, rising and falling regularly, produced a rhythmical beat, which began to painfully absorb my attention. Slowly this thumping merged into a senseless echo of the mysterious female of the hotel parlour, and shaped itself into this awful and benumbing axiom : — "Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace. Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace." Inequalities of the road only quickened its utterance or drawled it to an exasperating length.

It was of no use to seriously consider the statement. It was of no use to except to it indignantly. It was of no use to recall the many instances where praise to the face had redounded to the everlasting honour of praiser and be-praised ; of no use to dwell sentimentally on modest genius and courage lifted up and strengthened by open commendation ; of no use to except to the mysterious female,—to picture her as rearing a thin-blooded generation on selfish and mechanically-repeated axioms,—all this failed to counteract the monotonous repetition of this sentence. There was nothing to do but to give in, and I was about to accept it weakly, as we too often treat other illusions of darkness and necessity, for the time being, when I became aware of some other annoyance that had been forcing itself upon me for the last few moments. How quiet the driver was !

Was there any driver? Had I any reason to suppose that he was not lying gagged and bound on the roadside, and the highwayman, with blackened face, who did the thing so quietly, driving me—whither? The thing is perfectly feasible. And what is this fancy now being jolted out of me? A story? It's of no use to keep it back, particularly in this abysmal vehicle, and here it comes :—I am a Marquis—a French Marquis ; French, because the peerage is not so well known, and the country is better adapted to romantic incident—a Marquis, because the democratic reader delights in the nobility. My name is something *ligny*. I am coming from Paris to my country-seat at St. Germain. It is a dark night, and I fall asleep and tell my honest coachman, André, not to disturb me, and dream of an angel. The carriage at last stops at the château. It is so dark that, when I alight, I do not recognise the face of the footman who holds the carriage-door. But what of that?—*peste !* I am heavy with sleep. The same obscurity also hides the old familiar indecencies of the statues on the terrace ; but there is a door, and it opens and shuts behind me smartly. Then I find myself in a trap, in the presence of the brigand who has quietly gagged poor André and conducted the carriage thither. There is nothing for me to do, as a gallant French Marquis, but to say, "*Parbleu !*" draw my rapier, and die valorously ! I am found, a week or two after, outside a deserted *cabaret* near the barrier, with a hole through my ruffled linen, and my pockets stripped. No ; on second thoughts, I am rescued,—rescued by the angel I have been dreaming of, who is the assumed daughter of the brigand, but the real daughter of an intimate friend.

Looking from the window again, in the vain hope of distinguishing the driver, I found my eyes were growing accustomed to the darkness. I could see the distant horizon, defined by India-inky woods relieving a light r sky

A few stars, widely spaced in this picture, glimmering sadly. I noticed again the infinite depth of patient sorrow in their serene faces ; and I hope that the Vandal who first applied the flippant "twinkle" to them may not be driven melancholy mad by their reproachful eyes. I noticed again the mystic charm of space, that imparts a sense of individual solitude to each integer of the densest constellation, involving the smallest star with immeasurable loneliness. Something of this calm and solitude crept over me, and I dozed in my gloomy cavern. When I awoke the full moon was rising. Seen from my window, it had an indescribably unreal and theatrical effect. It was the full moon of *Norma*—that remarkable celestial phenomenon which rises so palpably to a hushed audience and a sublime *andante* chorus, until the *Casta Diva* is sung—the "inconstant moon" that then and thereafter remains fixed in the heavens as though it were a part of the solar system inaugurated by Joshua. Again the white-robed Druids filed past me, again I saw that improbable mistletoe cut from that impossible oak, and again cold chills ran down my back with the first strain of the recitative. The thumping springs essayed to beat time, and the private box-like obscurity of the vehicle lent a cheap enchantment to the view. But it was a vast improvement upon my past experience, and I hugged the fond delusion.

My fears for the driver were dissipated with the rising moon. A familiar sound had assured me of his presence in the full possession of at least one of his most important functions. Frequent and full expectoration convinced me that his lips were as yet not sealed by the gag of highwaymen, and soothed my anxious ear. With this load lifted from my mind, and assisted by the mild presence of Diana, who left, as when she visited Endymion, much of

her splendour outside my cavern,—I looked around the empty vehicle. On the forward seat lay a woman's hair-pin. I picked it up with an interest that, however, soon abated. There was no scent of the roses to cling to it still, not even of hair-oil. No bent or twist in its rigid angles betrayed any trait of its wearer's character. I tried to think that it might have been "Mariar's." I tried to imagine that, confining the symmetrical curls of that girl, it might have heard the soft compliments whispered in her ears which provoked the wrath of the aged female. But in vain. It was reticent and unswerving in its upright fidelity, and at last slipped listlessly through my fingers.

I had dozed repeatedly,—waked on the threshold of oblivion by contact with some of the angles of the coach, and feeling that I was unconsciously assuming, in imitation of a humble insect of my childish recollection, that spherical shape which could best resist those impressions, when I perceived that the moon, riding high in the heavens, had begun to separate the formless masses of the shadowy landscape. Trees isolated, in clumps, and assemblages, changed places before my window. The sharp outlines of the distant hills came back as in daylight, but little softened in the dry, cold, dewless air of a California summer night. I was wondering how late it was, and thinking that if the horses of the night travelled as slowly as the team before us, Faustus might have been spared his agonising prayer, when a sudden spasm of activity attacked my driver. A succession of whip-snappings, like a pack of Chinese crackers, broke from the box before me. The stage leaped forward, and when I could pick myself from under the seat, a long white building had in some mysterious way rolled before my window. It must be Slumgullion! As I descended from the stage I addressed the driver:—

"I thought you changed horses on the road?"

"So we did. Two hours ago."

"That's odd. I didn't notice it."

"Must have been asleep, sir. Hope you had a pleasant nap. Bully place for a nice quiet snooze, empty stage, sir!"

## The Man of no Account.

HIS name was Fagg,—David Fagg. He came to California in '52 with us, in the *Skyscraper*. I don't think he did it in an adventurous way. He probably had no other place to go to. When a knot of us young fellows would recite what splendid opportunities we resigned to go, and how sorry our friends were to have us leave, and show daguerreotypes and locks of hair, and talk of Mary and Susan, the man of no account used to sit by and listen with a pained, mortified expression on his plain face, and say nothing. I think he had nothing to say. He had no associates, except when we patronised him; and, in point of fact, he was a good deal of sport to us. He was always sea-sick whenever we had a capful of wind. He never got his sea-legs on either. And I never shall forget how we all laughed when Rattler took him the piece of pork on a string, and——But you know that time-honoured joke. And then we had such a splendid lark with him. Miss Fanny Twinkler couldn't bear the sight of him, and we used to make Fagg think that she had taken a fancy to him, and sent him little delicacies and books from the cabin. You ought to have witnessed the rich scene that took place when he came up, stammering and very sick, to thank her! Didn't she flash up grandly, and beautifully, and scornfully? So like "Medora," Rattler said,—Rattler knew Byron by heart,—and wasn't old Fagg awfully cut up? But he got

over it, and when Rattler fell sick at Valparaiso, old Fagg used to nurse him. You see he was a good sort of fellow, but he lacked manliness and spirit.

He had absolutely no idea of poetry. I've seen him sit stolidly by, mending his old clothes, when Rattler delivered that stirring apostrophe of Byron's to the ocean. He asked Rattler once, quite seriously, if he thought Byron was ever sea-sick. I don't remember Rattler's reply, but I know we all laughed very much, and I have no doubt it was something good, for Rattler was smart.

When the *Skyscraper* arrived at San Francisco we had a grand "feed." We agreed to meet every year and perpetuate the occasion. Of course we didn't invite Fagg. Fagg was a steerage passenger, and it was necessary, you see, now we were ashore, to exercise a little discretion. But Old Fagg, as we called him,—he was only about twenty-five years old, by the way,—was the source of immense amusement to us that day. It appeared that he had conceived the idea that he could walk to Sacramento, and actually started off afoot. We had a good time, and shook hands with one another all around, and so parted. Ah, me! only eight years ago, and yet some of those hands, then clasped in amity, have been clenched at each other, or have dipped furtively in one another's pockets. I know that we didn't dine together the next year, because young Barker swore he wouldn't put his feet under the same mahogany with such a very contemptible scoundrel as that Mixer; and Nibbles, who borrowed money at Valparaiso of young Stubbs, who was then a waiter in a restaurant, didn't like to meet such people.

When I bought a number of shares in the Coyote Tunnel at Mugginsville, in '54, I thought I'd take a run up there and see it. I stopped at the Empire Hotel, and after dinner I got a horse and rode round the town and out to

the claim. One of those individuals whom newspaper correspondents call "our intelligent informant," and to whom in all small communities the right of answering questions is tacitly yielded, was quietly pointed out to me. Habit had enabled him to work and talk at the same time, and he never pretermitted either. He gave me a history of the claim, and added: "You see, stranger (he addressed the bank before him), gold is sure to come outer that theer claim (he put in a comma with his pick), but the old propri-e-tor (he wriggled out the word and the point of his pick) warn't of much account (a long stroke of the pick for a period). He was green, and let the boys about here jump him,"—and the rest of his sentence was confided to his hat, which he had removed to wipe his manly brow with his red bandana.

I asked him who was the original proprietor.

"His name war Fagg."

I went to see him. He looked a little older and plainer. He had worked hard, he said, and was getting on "so-so." I took quite a liking to him and patronised him to some extent. Whether I did so because I was beginning to have a distrust for such fellows as Rattler and Mixer is not necessary for me to state.

You remember how the Coyote Tunnel went in, and how awfully we shareholders were done! Well, the next thing I heard was that Rattler, who was one of the heaviest shareholders, was up at Mugginsville keeping bar for the proprietor of the Mugginsville Hotel, and that Old Fagg had struck it rich, and didn't know what to do with his money. All this was told me by Mixer, who had been there settling up matters, and likewise that Fagg was sweet upon the daughter of the proprietor of the aforesaid hotel. And so by hearsay and letter I eventually gathered that oid Robins, the hotel man, was trying to get up a match between Nellie

Robins and Fagg. Nellie was a pretty, plump, and foolish little thing, and would do just as her father wished. I thought it would be a good thing for Fagg if he should marry and settle down; that as a married man he might be of some account. So I ran up to Mugginsville one day to look after things.

It did me an immense deal of good to make Rattler mix my drinks for me,—Rattler! the gay, brilliant, and unconquerable Rattler, who had tried to snub me two years ago! I talked to him about Old Fagg and Nellie, particularly as I thought the subject was distasteful. He never liked Fagg, and he was sure, he said, that Nellie didn't. Did Nellie like anybody else? He turned round to the mirror behind the bar and brushed up his hair. I understood the conceited wretch. I thought I'd put Fagg on his guard, and get him to hurry up matters. I had a long talk with him. You could see by the way the poor fellow acted that he was badly stuck. He sighed, and promised to pluck up courage to hurry matters to a crisis. Nellie was a good girl, and I think had a sort of quiet respect for Old Fagg's unobtrusiveness. But her fancy was already taken captive by Rattler's superficial qualities, which were obvious and pleasing. I don't think Nellie was any worse than you or I. We are more apt to take acquaintances at their apparent value than their intrinsic worth. It's less trouble, and, except when we want to trust them, quite as convenient. The difficulty with women is that their feelings are apt to get interested sooner than ours, and then, you know, reasoning is out of the question. This is what Old Fagg would have known had he been of any account. But he wasn't. So much the worse for him.

It was a few months afterward, and I was sitting in my office when I walked Old Fagg. I was surprised to see him down, but we talked over the current topics in that

mechanical manner of people who know that they have something else to say, but are obliged to get at it in that formal way. After an interval, Fagg in his natural manner said—

“I’m going home!”

“Going home?”

“Yes,—that is, I think I’ll take a trip to the Atlantic States. I came to see you, as you know I have some little property, and I have executed a power of attorney for you to manage my affairs. I have some papers I’d like to leave with you. Will you take charge of them?”

“Yes,” I said. “But what of Nellie?”

His face fell. He tried to smile, and the combination resulted in one of the most startling and grotesque effects I ever beheld. At length he said—

“I shall not marry Nellie,—that is,”—he seemed to apologise internally for the positive form of expression,—“I think that I had better not.”

“David Fagg,” I said with sudden severity, “you’re of no account!”

To my astonishment, his face brightened. “Yes,” said he, “that’s it!—I’m of no account! But I always knew it. You see, I thought Rattler loved that girl as well as I did, and I knew she liked him better than she did me, and would be happier, I dare say, with him. But then I knew that old Robins would have preferred me to him, as I was better off,—and the girl would do as he said,—and, you see, I thought I was kinder in the way,—and so I left. But,” he continued, as I was about to interrupt him, “for fear the old man might object to Rattler, I’ve lent him enough to set him up in business for himself in Dogtown. A pushing, active, brilliant fellow, you know, like Rattler, can get along, and will soon be in his old position again,—

and you needn't be hard on him, you know, if he doesn't. Good-bye."

I was too much disgusted with his treatment of that Rattler to be at all amiable, but as his business was profitable, I promised to attend to it, and he left. A few weeks passed. The return steamer arrived, and a terrible incident occupied the papers for days afterward. People in all parts of the State conned eagerly the details of an awful shipwreck, and those who had friends aboard went away by themselves, and read the long list of the lost under their breath. I read of the gifted, the gallant, the noble, and loved ones who had perished, and among them I think I was the first to read the name of David Fagg. For the "man of no account" had "gone home!"

## Notes by Flood and Field.

### PART I.—IN THE FIELD.

It was near the close of an October day that I began to be disagreeably conscious of the Sacramento Valley. I had been riding since sunrise, and my course through the depressing monotony of the long level landscape affected me more like a dull dyspeptic dream than a business journey, performed under that sincerest of natural phenomena,—a California sky. The recurring stretches of brown and baked fields, the gaping fissures in the dusty trail, the hard outline of the distant hills, and the herds of slowly moving cattle, seemed like features of some glittering stereoscopic picture that never changed. Active exercise might have removed this feeling, but my horse by some subtle instinct had long since given up all ambitious effort, and had lapsed into a dogged trot.

It was autumn, but not the season suggested to the Atlantic reader under that title. The sharply defined boundaries of the wet and dry seasons were prefigured in the clear outlines of the distant hills. In the dry atmosphere the decay of vegetation was too rapid for the slow hectic which overtakes an Eastern landscape, or else Nature was too practical for such thin disguises. She merely turned the Hippocratic face to the spectator, with the old diagnosis of death in her sharp, contracted features.

In the contemplation of such a prospect there was little to excite any but a morbid fancy. There were no clouds in the flinty blue heavens, and the setting of the sun was accompanied with as little ostentation as was consistent with the dryly practical atmosphere. Darkness soon followed, with a rising wind, which increased as the shadows deepened on the plain. The fringe of alder by the water-course began to loom up as I urged my horse forward. A half-hour's active spurring brought me to a *corral*, and a little beyond a house, so low and broad, it seemed at first sight to be half buried in the earth.

My second impression was that it had grown out of the soil, like some monstrous vegetable, its dreary proportions were so in keeping with the vast prospect. There were no recesses along its roughly boarded walls for vagrant and unprofitable shadows to lurk in the daily sunshine. No projection for the wind by night to grow musical over, to wail, whistle, or whisper to; only a long wooden shelf containing a chilly-looking tin basin and a bar of soap. Its uncurtained windows were red with the sinking sun, as though bloodshot and inflamed from a too long unlided existence. The tracks of cattle led to its front door, firmly closed against the rattling wind.

To avoid being confounded with this familiar element, I walked to the rear of the house, which was connected with a smaller building by a slight platform. A grizzled, hard-faced old man was standing there, and met my salutation with a look of inquiry, and, without speaking, led the way to the principal room. As I entered, four young men who were reclining by the fire slightly altered their attitudes of perfect repose, but beyond that betrayed neither curiosity nor interest. A hound started from a dark corner with a growl, but was immediately kicked by the old man into obscurity and silenced again. I can't tell why, but I in-

stantly received the impression that for a long time the group by the fire had not uttered a word or moved a muscle. Taking a seat, I briefly stated my business.

Was a United States surveyor. Had come on account of the Espiritu Santo rancho. Wanted to correct the exterior boundaries of township lines, so as to connect with the near exteriors of private grants. There had been some intervention to the old survey by a Mr. Tryan, who had pre-empted adjacent—"Settled land warrants," interrupted the old man. "Ah, yes! land warrants,—and then this was Mr. Tryan?"

I had spoken mechanically, for I was preoccupied in connecting other public lines with private surveys, as I looked in his face. It was certainly a hard face, and reminded me of the singular effect of that mining operation known as "ground sluicing;" the harder lines of underlying character were exposed, and what were once plastic curves and soft outlines were obliterated by some powerful agency.

There was a dryness in his voice not unlike the prevailing atmosphere of the valley, as he launched into an *ex parte* statement of the contest, with a fluency which, like the wind without, showed frequent and unrestrained expression. He told me—what I had already learned—that the boundary line of the old Spanish grant was a creek, described in the loose phraseology of the *deseño* as beginning in the *valda* or skirt of the hill, its precise location long the subject of litigation. I listened and answered with little interest, for my mind was still distracted by the wind which swept violently by the house, as well as by his odd face, which was again reflected in the resemblance that the silent group by the fire bore toward him. He was still talking, and the wind was yet blowing, when my confused attention was aroused by a remark addressed to the recumbent figures.

"Now, then, which on ye'll see the stranger up the creek to Altascar's to-morrow?"

There was a general movement of opposition in the group but no decided answer.

"Kin you go, Kerg?"

"Who's to look up stock in Strarberry per-ar-ie?"

This seemed to imply a negative, and the old man turned to another hopeful, who was pulling the fur from a mangy bear-skin on which he was lying, with an expression as though it were somebody's hair.

"Well, Tom, wot's to hinder you from goin'?"

"Mam's goin' to Brown's store at sun-up, and I s'pose I've got to pack her and the baby again."

I think the expression of scorn this unfortunate youth exhibited for the filial duty into which he had been evidently beguiled was one of the finest things I had ever seen.

"Wise?"

Wise deigned no verbal reply, but figuratively thrust a worn and patched boot into the discourse. The old man flushed quickly.

"I told ye to get Brown to give you a pair the last time you war down the river."

"Said he wouldn't without an order. Said it was like pulling gum-teeth to get the money from you even then."

There was a grim smile at this local hit at the old man's parsimony, and Wise, who was clearly the privileged wit of the family, sank back in honourable retirement.

"Well, Joe, ef your boots are new, and you aren't pestered with wimmin and children, p'r'aps you'll go," said Tryan, with a nervous twitching, intended for a smile, about a mouth not remarkable mirthful.

Joe lifted a pair of bushy eyebrows and said shortly—

"Got no saddle."

"Wot s gone of your saddle?"

"Kerg, there!" indicating his brother with a look such as Cain might have worn at the sacrifice.

"You lie!" returned Kerg, cheerfully.

Tryan sprang to his feet, seizing the chair, flourishing it around his head and gazing furiously in the hard young faces which fearlessly met his own. But it was only for a moment; his arm soon dropped by his side, and a look of hopeless fatality crossed his face. He allowed me to take the chair from his hand, and I was trying to pacify him by the assurance that I required no guide, when the irrepressible Wise again lifted his voice—

"Theer's George comin'! why don't ye ask him? He'll go and introduce you to Don Fernandy's darter, too, ef you ain't pertickler."

The laugh which followed this joke, which evidently had some domestic allusion (the general tendency of rural pleasantry), was followed by a light step on the platform, and the young man entered. Seeing a stranger present, he stopped and coloured, made a shy salute and coloured again, and then, drawing a box from the corner, sat down, his hands clasped tightly together and his very handsome bright blue eyes turned frankly on mine.

Perhaps I was in a condition to receive the romantic impression he made upon me, and I took it upon myself to ask his company as guide, and he cheerfully assented. But some domestic duty called him presently away.

The fire gleamed brightly on the hearth, and, no longer resisting the prevailing influence, I silently watched the spiriting flame, listening to the wind which continually shook the tenement. Besides the one chair, which had acquired a new importance in my eyes, I presently discovered a crazy table in one corner, with an inkbottle and pen, the latter in that greasy state of decomposition peculiar to country taverns and farmhouses. A goodly array of rifles and

double-barrelled guns stocked the corner; half a dozen saddles and blankets lay near, with a mild flavour of the horse about them. Some deer and bear skins completed the inventory. As I sat there, with the silent group around me, the shadowy gloom within and the dominant wind without, I found it difficult to believe I had ever known a different existence. My profession had often led me to wilder scenes, but rarely among those whose unrestrained habits and easy unconsciousness made me feel so lonely and uncomfortable. I shrank closer to myself, not without grave doubts—which I think occur naturally to people in like situations—that this was the general rule of humanity, and I was a solitary and somewhat gratuitous exception.

It was a relief when a laconic announcement of supper by a weak-eyed girl caused a general movement in the family. We walked across the dark platform, which led to another low-ceiled room. Its entire length was occupied by a table, at the further end of which a weak-eyed woman was already taking her repast as she at the same time gave nourishment to a weak-eyed baby. As the formalities of introduction had been dispensed with, and as she took no notice of me, I was enabled to slip into a seat without discomposing or interrupting her. Tryan extemporised a grace, and the attention of the family became absorbed in bacon, potatoes, and dried apples.

The meal was a sincere one. Gentle gurglings at the upper end of the table often betrayed the presence of the "wellspring of pleasure." The conversation generally referred to the labours of the day, and comparing notes as to the whereabouts of missing stock. Yet the supper was such a vast improvement upon the previous intellectual feast, that when a chance allusion of mine to the business of my visit brought out the elder Tryan, the interest grew

quite exciting. I remember he inveighed bitterly against the system of ranch-holding by the "Greasers," as he was pleased to term the native Californians. As the same ideas have been sometimes advanced under more pretentious circumstances, they may be worthy of record.

"Look at 'em holdin' the finest grazin' land that ever lay outer doors? Whar's the papers for it? Was it grants? Mighty fine grants,—most of 'em made arter the 'Merrikans got possession. More fools the 'Merrikans for lettin' 'em hold 'em. Wat paid for 'em? 'Merrikan blood and money.

"Didn't they oughter have suthin out of their native country? Wot for? Did they ever improve? Got a lot of yaller-skinned diggers, not so sensible as niggers, to look arter stock, and they a sittin' home and smokin'. With their gold and silver candlesticks, and missions, and crucifixens, priests and graven idols, and sich? Them sort things wurent allowed in Mizzoori."

At the mention of improvements I involuntarily lifted my eyes, and met the half-laughing, half-embarrassed look of George. The act did not escape detection, and I had at once the satisfaction of seeing that the rest of the family had formed an offensive alliance against us.

"It was agin Nater and agin God," added Tryan. "God never intended gold in the rocks to be made into heathen candlesticks and crucifixens. That's why He sent 'Merrikans here. Nater never intended such a climate for lazy lopers. She never gin six months' sunshine to be slept and smoked away."

How long he continued, and with what further illustration, I could not say, for I took an early opportunity to escape to the sitting-room. I was soon followed by George, who called me to an open door leading to a smaller room, and pointed to a bed.

"You'd better sleep there to-night," he said; "you'll be more comfortable, and I'll call you early."

I thanked him, and would have asked him several questions which were then troubling me, but he shyly slipped to the door and vanished.

A shadow seemed to fall on the room when he had gone. The "boys" returned, one by one, and shuffled to their old places. A larger log was thrown on the fire, and the huge chimney glowed like a furnace, but it did not seem to melt or subdue a single line of the hard faces that it lit. In half an hour later, the furs which had served as chairs by day undertook the nightly office of mattresses, and each received its owner's full-length figure. Mr. Tryan had not returned, and I missed George. I sat there, until, wakeful and nervous, I saw the fire fall and shadows mount the wall. There was no sound but the rushing of the wind and the snoring of the sleepers. At last, feeling the place insupportable, I seized my hat, and, opening the door, ran out briskly into the night.

The acceleration of my torpid pulse in the keen fight with the wind, whose violence was almost equal to that of a tornado, and the familiar faces of the bright stars above me, I felt as a blessed relief. I ran not knowing whither, and when I halted, the square outline of the house was lost in the alder bushes. An uninterrupted plain stretched before me, like a vast sea beaten flat by the force of the gale. As I kept on I noticed a slight elevation toward the horizon, and presently my progress was impeded by the ascent of an Indian mound. It struck me forcibly as resembling an island in the sea. Its height gave me a better view of the expanding plain. But even here I found no rest. The ridiculous interpretation Tryan had given the climate was somehow sung in my ears and echoed in my throbbing pulse, as, guided by the star, I sought the house again.

But I felt fresher and more natural as I stepped upon the platform. The door of the lower building was open, and the old man was sitting beside the table, thumbing the leaves of a Bible with a look in his face as though he were hunting up prophecies against the "Greaser." I turned to enter, but my attention was attracted by a blanketed figure lying beside the house on the platform. The broad chest heaving with healthy slumber, and the open, honest face were familiar. It was George, who had given up his bed to the stranger among his people. I was about to wake him, but he lay so peaceful and quiet, I felt awed and hushed. And I went to bed with a pleasant impression of his handsome face and tranquil figure soothing me to sleep.

. . . . .

I was awakened the next morning from a sense of lulled repose and grateful silence by the cheery voice of George, who stood beside my bed ostentatiously twirling a "riata," as if to recall the duties of the day to my sleep-bewildered eyes. I looked around me. The wind had been magically laid, and the sun shone warmly through the windows. A dash of cold water, with an extra chill on from the tin basin, helped to brighten me. It was still early, but the family had already breakfasted and dispersed, and a waggon winding far in the distance showed that the unfortunate Tom had already "packed" his relatives away. I felt more cheerful,—there are few troubles Youth cannot distance with the start of a good night's rest. After a substantial breakfast, prepared by George, in a few moments we were mounted and dashing down the plain.

We followed the line of alder that defined the creek, now dry and baked with summer's heat, but which in winter, George told me, overflowed its banks. I still retain a vivid impression of that morning's ride, the far-off mountains, like *silhouettes*, against the steel-blue sky, the crisp, dry air, and

the expanding track before me, animated often by the well-knit figure of George Tryan, musical with jingling spurs and picturesque with flying "riata." He rode a powerful native roan, wild-eyed, untiring in stride and unbroken in nature. Alas! the curves of beauty were concealed by the cumbrous *machillas* of the Spanish saddle, which levels all equine distinctions. The single rein lay loosely on the cruel bit that can gripe, and, if need be, crush the jaw it controls.

Again the illimitable freedom of the valley rises before me as we again bear down into sunlit space. Can this be "Chu-Chu," staid and respectable filly of American pedigree,—“Chu-Chu,” forgetful of plank-roads and cobblestones, wild with excitement, twinkling her small white feet beneath me? George laughs out of a cloud of dust, “Give her her head; don’t you see she likes it?” and “Chu-Chu” seems to like it, and, whether bitten by native tarantula into native barbarism or emulous of the roan, “blood” asserts itself, and in a moment the peaceful servitude of years is beaten out in the music of her clattering hoofs. The creek widens to a deep gully. We dive into it and up on the opposite side, carrying a moving cloud of impalpable powder with us. Cattle are scattered over the plain, grazing quietly or banded together in vast restless herds. George makes a wide, indefinite sweep with the “riata,” as if to include them all in his vaquero’s loop, and says, “Ours!”

“About how many, George?”

“Don’t know.”

“How many?”

“Well, p'raps three thousand head,” says George, reflecting. “We don’t know, takes five men to look ’em up and keep run.”

“What are they worth?”

"About thirty dollars a head."

I make a rapid calculation, and look my astonishment at the laughing George. Perhaps a recollection of the domestic economy of the Tryan household is expressed in that look, for George averts his eye and says, apologetically—

"I've tried to get the old man to sell and build, but you know he says it ain't no use to settle down just yet. We must keep movin'. In fact, he built the shanty for that purpose, lest titles should fall through, and we'd have to get up and move stakes farther down."

Suddenly his quick eye detects some unusual sight in a herd we are passing, and with an exclamation he puts his roan into the centre of the mass. I follow, or rather "Chu-Chu" darts after the roan, and in a few moments we are in the midst of apparently inextricable horns and hoofs. "Toro!" shouts George, with vaquero enthusiasm, and the band opens a way for the swinging "riata." I can feel their steaming breaths, and their spume is cast on "Chu-Chu's" quivering flank.

Wild, devilish-looking beasts are they; not such shapes as Jove might have chosen to woo a goddess, nor such as peacefully range the downs of Devon, but lean and hungry Cassius-like bovines, economically got up to meet the exigencies of a six-months' rainless climate, and accustomed to wrestle with the distracting wind and the blinding dust.

"That's not our brand," says George; "they're strange stock," and he points to what my scientific eye recognises as the astrological sign of Venus deeply seared in the brown flanks of the bull he is chasing. But the herd are closing round us with low mutterings, and George has again recourse to the authoritative "Toro," and with swinging "riata" divides the "bossy bucklers" on either side.

When we are free, and breathing somewhat more easily, I venture to ask George if they ever attack any one.

"Never horsemen,—sometimes footmen. Not through rage, you know, but curiosity. They think a man and his horse are one, and if they meet a chap afoot, they run him down and trample him under hoof, in the pursuit of knowledge. But," adds George, "here's the lower bench of the foothills, and here's Altascar's corral, and that white building you see yonder is the *casa*."

A whitewashed wall enclosed a court containing another adobe building, baked with the solar beams of many summers. Leaving our horses in the charge of a few peons in the courtyard, who were basking lazily in the sun, we entered a low doorway, where a deep shadow and an agreeable coolness fell upon us, as sudden and grateful as a plunge in cool water, from its contrast with the external glare and heat. In the centre of a low-ceiled apartment sat an old man with a black silk handkerchief tied about his head, the few grey hairs that escaped from its folds relieving his gamboge-coloured face. The odour of cigarritos was as incense added to the cathedral gloom of the building.

As Señor Altascar rose with well-bred gravity to receive us, George advanced with such a heightened colour, and such a blending of tenderness and respect in his manner, that I was touched to the heart by so much devotion in the careless youth. In fact, my eyes were still dazzled by the effect of the outer sunshine, and at first I did not see the white teeth and black eyes of Pepita, who slipped into the corridor as we entered.

It was no pleasant matter to disclose particulars of business which would deprive the old Señor of the greater part of that land we had just ridden over, and I did it with great embarrassment. But he listened calmly,—not a muscle of his dark face stirring,—and the smoke curling placidly

from his lips showed his regular respiration. When I had finished, he offered quietly to accompany us to the line of demarcation. George had meanwhile disappeared, but a suspicious conversation in broken Spanish and English in the corridor, betrayed his vicinity. When he returned again, a little absent-minded, the old man, by far the coolest and most self-possessed of the party, extinguished his black silk cap beneath that stiff, uncomely *sombrero* which all native Californians affect. A *serapa* thrown over his shoulders hinted that he was waiting. Horses are always ready saddled in Spanish ranchos, and in half an hour from the time of our arrival we were again "loping" in the starling sunlight.

But not as cheerfully as before. George and myself were weighed down by restraint, and Altascar was gravely quiet. To break the silence, and by way of a consolatory essay, I hinted to him that there might be further intervention or appeal, but the proffered oil and wine were returned with a careless shrug of the shoulders and a sententious, "*Que bueno ? Your courts are always just.*"

The Indian mound of the previous night's discovery was a bearing monument of the new line, and there we halted. We were surprised to find the old man Tryan waiting us. For the first time during our interview the old Spaniard seemed moved and the blood rose in his yellow cheek. I was anxious to close the scene, and pointed out the corner boundaries as clearly as my recollection served.

"The deputies will be here to-morrow to run the lines from this initial point, and there will be no further trouble, I believe, gentlemen."

Señor Altascar had dismounted and was gathering a few tufts of dried grass in his hands. George and I exchanged glances. He presently arose from his stooping posture, and advancing to within a few paces of Joseph Tryan, said, in a voice broken with passion—

"And I, Fernando Jesus Maria Altascar, put you in possession of my land in the fashion of my country."

He threw a sod to each of the cardinal points.

"I don't know your courts, your judges, or your *corre-gidores*. Take the *llano*!—and take this with it. May the drought seize your cattle till their tongues hang down as long as those of your lying lawyers! May it be the curse and torment of your old age, as you and yours have made it of mine!"

We stepped between the principal actors in this scene, which only the passion of Altascar made tragical, but Tryan, with a humility but ill concealing his triumph, interrupted—

"Let him curse on. He'll find 'em coming home to him sooner than the cattle he has lost through his sloth and pride. The Lord is on the side of the just, as well as agin all slanderers and revilers."

Altascar but half guessed the meaning of the Missourian, yet sufficiently to drive from his mind all but the extravagant power of his native invective.

"Stealer of the Sacrament! Open not!—open not, I say, your lying, Judas lips to me! Ah! half-breed, with the soul of a coyote!—Car-r-r-ramba!"

With his passion reverberating among the consonants like distant thunder, he laid his hand upon the mane of his horse as though it had been the grey locks of his adversary, swung himself into the saddle and galloped away.

George turned to me.

"Will you go back with us to-night?"

I thought of the cheerless walls, the silent figures by the fire, and the roaring wind, and hesitated.

"Well, then, good-bye."

"Good-bye, George."

Another wring of the hands and we parted. I had not

ridden far, when I turned and looked back. The wind had risen early that afternoon, and was already sweeping across the plain. A cloud of dust travelled before it, and a picturesque figure occasionally emerging therefrom was my last indistinct impression of George Tryan.

#### PART II.—IN THE FLOOD.

Three months after the survey of the Espiritu Santo rancho, I was again in the valley of the Sacramento. But a general and terrible visitation had erased the memory of that event as completely as I supposed it had obliterated the boundary monuments I had planted. The great flood of 1861-62 was at its height, when, obeying some indefinite yearning, I took my carpet-bag and embarked for the inundated valley.

There was nothing to be seen from the bright cabin windows of the *Golden City* but night deepening over the water. The only sound was the pattering rain, and that had grown monotonous for the past two weeks, and did not disturb the national gravity of my countrymen as they silently sat around the cabin stove. Some on errands of relief to friends and relatives wore anxious faces, and conversed soberly on the one absorbing topic. Others like myself, attracted by curiosity, listened eagerly to newer details. But, with that human disposition to seize upon any circumstance that might give chance event the exaggerated importance of instinct, I was half conscious of something more than curiosity as an impelling motive.

The dripping of rain, the low gurgle of water, and a leaden sky greeted us the next morning as we lay beside the half-submerged levee of Sacramento. Here, however, the novelty of boats to convey us to the hotels was an appeal that was

irresistible. I resigned myself to a dripping rubber-cased mariner called "Joe," and wrapping myself in a shining cloak of the like material, about as suggestive of warmth as court-plaster might have been, took my seat in the stern-sheets of his boat. It was no slight inward struggle to part from the steamér, that to most of the passengers was the only visible connecting link between us and the dry and habitable earth, but we pulled away and entered the city, stemming a rapid current as we shot the levee.

We glided up the long level of K Street,—once a cheerful busy thoroughfare, now distressing in its silent desolation. The turbid water, which seemed to meet the horizon edge before us, flowed at right angles in sluggish rivers through the streets. Nature had revenged herself on the local taste by disarraying the regular rectangles by huddling houses on street corners, where they presented abrupt gables to the current, or by capsizing them in compact ruin. Crafts of all kinds were gliding in and out of low-arched doorways. The water was over the top of the fences surrounding well-kept gardens, in the first storeys of hotels and private dwellings, trailing its slime on velvet carpets as well as roughly boarded floors. And a silence quite as suggestive as the visible desolation was in the voiceless streets that no longer echoed to carriage-wheel or footfall. The low ripple of water, the occasional splash of oars, or the warning cry of boatmen were the few signs of life and habitation.

With such scenes before my eyes and such sounds in my ears, as I lie lazily in the boat, is mingled the song of my gondolier, who sings to the music of his oars. It is not quite as romantic as his brother of the Lido might improvise, but my Yankee "Giuseppe" has the advantage of earnestness and energy, and gives a graphic description of the terrors of the past week and of noble deeds of self-sacrifice and devotion, occasionally pointing out a balcony from which

some California Bianca or Laura had been snatched, half-clothed and famished. Giuseppe is otherwise peculiar, and refuses the proffered fare, for—am I not a citizen of San Francisco, which was first to respond to the suffering cry of Sacramento? and is not he, Giuseppe, a member of the Howard Society? No, Giuseppe is poor, but cannot take my money. Still, if I must spend it, there is the Howard Society, and the women and children without food and clothing at the Agricultural Hall.

I thank the generous gondolier, and we go to the Hall,—a dismal, bleak place, ghastly with the memories of last year's opulence and plenty, and here Giuseppe's fare is swelled by the stranger's mite. But here Giuseppe tells me of the "Relief Boat" which leaves for the flooded district in the interior, and here, profiting by the lesson he has taught me, I make the resolve to turn my curiosity to the account of others, and am accepted of those who go forth to succour and help the afflicted. Giuseppe takes charge of my carpet-bag, and does not part from me until I stand on the slippery deck of "Relief Boat No. 3."

An hour later I am in the pilot house, looking down upon what was once the channel of a peaceful river. But its banks are only defined by tossing tufts of willow washed by the long swell that breaks over a vast inland sea. Stretches of "tule" land fertilised by its once regular channel, and dotted by flourishing ranchos, are now cleanly erased. The cultivated profile of the old landscape had faded. Dotted lines in symmetrical perspective mark orchards that are buried and chilled in the turbid flood. The roofs of a few farmhouses are visible, and here and there the smoke curling from chimneys of half submerged tenements shows an undaunted life within. Cattle and sheep are gathered on Indian mounds waiting the fate of their companions, whose carcasses drift by us or swing in eddies with the

wrecks of barns and outhouses. Waggon's are stranded everywhere where the tide could carry them. As I wipe the moistened glass, I see nothing but water, pattering on the deck from the lowering clouds, dashing against the window, dripping from the willows, hissing by the wheels, everywhere washing, coiling, sapping, hurrying in rapids, or swelling at last into deeper and vaster lakes, awful in their suggestive quiet and concealment.

As day fades into night the monotony of this strange prospect grows oppressive. I seek the engine-room, and in the company of some of the few half-drowned sufferers we have already picked up from temporary rafts, I forget the general aspect of desolation in their individual misery. Later we meet the San Francisco packet, and transfer a number of our passengers. From them we learn how inward-bound vessels report to having struck the well-defined channel of the Sacramento fifty miles beyond the bar. There is a voluntary contribution taken among the generous travellers for the use of our afflicted, and we part company with a hearty "God speed" on either side. But our signal lights are not far distant before a familiar sound comes back to us,—an indomitable Yankee cheer,—which scatters the gloom.

Our course is altered, and we are steaming over the obliterated banks far in the interior. Once or twice black objects loom up near us,—the wrecks of houses floating by. There is a slight rift in the sky towards the north, and a few bearing stars to guide us over the waste. As we penetrate into shallower water, it is deemed advisable to divide our party into smaller boats, and diverge over the submerged prairie. I borrow a peacoat of one of the crew, and in that practical disguise am doubtfully permitted to pass into one of the boats. We give way northerly. It is quite dark yet, although the rift of cloud has widened.

It must have been about three o'clock, and we were lying upon our oars in an eddy formed by a clump of cottonwood, and the light of the steamer is a solitary bright star in the distance, when the silence is broken by the "bow oar"—

"Light ahead."

All eyes are turned in that direction. In a few seconds a twinkling light appears, shines steadily, and again disappears, as if by the shifting position of some black object apparently drifting close upon us.

"Stern, all !—a steamer !"

"Hold hard, there ! Steamer be d—d !" is the reply of the coxswain. "It's a house, and a big one too."

It is a big one, looming in the starlight like a huge fragment of the darkness. The light comes from a single candle which shines through a window as the great shape swings by. Some recollection is drifting back to me with it, as I listen with beating heart.

"There's some one in it, by heavens ! Give way, boys,—lay her alongside. Handsomely, now ! The door's fastened ; try the window ; no ! here's another !"

In another moment we are trampling in the water, which washes the floor to the depth of several inches. It is a large room, at the farther end of which an old man is sitting wrapped in a blanket, holding a candle in one hand, and apparently absorbed in the book he holds with the other. I spring toward him with an exclamation—

"Joseph Tryan !"

He does not move. We gather closer to him, and I lay my hand gently on his shoulder, and say—

"Look up, old man, look up ! Your wife and children, where are they ? The boys,—George ! Are they here ? are they safe ?"

He raises his head slowly, and turns his eyes to mine, and we involuntarily recoil before his look. It is a calm

and quiet glance, free from fear, anger, or pain; but it somehow sends the blood curdling through our veins. He bowed his head over his book again, taking no further notice of us. The men look at me compassionately and hold their peace. I make one more effort—

“Joseph Tryan, don’t you know me—the surveyor who surveyed your ranch,—the Espiritu Santo? Look up, old man!”

He shuddered and wrapped himself closer in his blanket. Presently he repeated to himself, “The surveyor who surveyed your ranch, Espiritu Santo,” over and over again, as though it were a lesson he was trying to fix in his memory.

I was turning sadly to the boatmen, when he suddenly caught me fearfully by the hand, and said—

“Hush!”

We were silent.

“Listen!” He puts his arm around my neck, and whispers in my ear, “I’m a *moving off*!”

“Moving off?”

“Hush! Don’t speak so loud. Moving off! Ah! wot’s that? Don’t you hear?—there!—listen!”

We listen, and hear the water gurgle and click beneath the floor.

“It’s them wot he sent!—Old Altascar sent. They’ve been here all night. I heard ’em first in the creek, when they came to tell the old man to move farther off. They came nearer and nearer. They whispered under the door, and I saw their eyes on the step,—their cruel, hard eyes. Ah! why don’t they quit?”

I tell the men to search the room and see if they can find any farther traces of the family, while Tryan resumes his old attitude. It is so much like the figure I remember on the breezy night, that a superstitious feeling is fast over-

coming me. When they have returned, I tell them briefly what I know of him, and the old man murmurs again—

“Why don’t they quit, then? They have the stock,—all gone—gone,—gone for the hides and hoofs,” and he groans bitterly.

“There are other boats below us. The shanty cannot have drifted far, and perhaps the family are safe by this time,” says the coxswain, hopefully.

“We lift the old man up, for he is quite helpless, and carry him to the boat. He is still grasping the Bible in his right hand, though its strengthening grace is blank to his vacant eye, and he cowers in the stern as we pull slowly to the steamer, while a pale gleam in the sky shows the coming day.

I was weary with excitement, and when we reached the steamer, and I had seen Joseph Tryan comfortably bestowed, I wrapped myself in a blanket near the boiler and presently fell asleep. But even then the figure of the old man often started before me, and a sense of uneasiness about George made a strong undercurrent to my drifting dreams. I was awakened at about eight o’clock in the morning by the engineer, who told me one of the old man’s sons had been picked up and was now on board.

“Is it George Tryan?” I ask quickly.

“Don’t know; but he’s a sweet one, whoever he is,” adds the engineer, with a smile at some luscious remembrance. “You’ll find him for’ard.”

I hurry to the bow of the boat, and find not George, but the irrepressible Wise, sitting on a coil of rope, a little dirtier and rather more dilapidated than I can remember having seen him.

He is examining, with apparent admiration, some rough, dry clothes that have been put out for his disposal. I cannot help thinking that circumstances have somewhat exalted

his usual cheerfulness. He puts me at my ease by at once addressing me—

“These are high old times, ain’t they? I say, what do you reckon’s become o’ them thar bound’ry monuments you stuck? Ah!”

The pause which succeeds this outburst is the effect of a spasm of admiration at a pair of high boots, which, by great exertion, he has at last pulled on his feet.

“So you’ve picked up the ole man in the shanty, clean crazy? He must have been soft to have stuck there instead o’ leavin’ with the old woman. Didn’t know me from Adam; took me for George!”

At this affecting instance of paternal forgetfulness, Wise was evidently divided between amusement and chagrin. I took advantage of the contending emotions to ask about George.

“Don’t know whar he is! If he’d tended stock instead of running about the prairie, packin’ off wimmin and children, he might have saved suthin. He lost every hoof and hide, I’ll bet a cookey! Say you,” to a passing boatman, “when are you goin’ to give us some grub? I’m hungry ’nough to skin and eat a hoss. Reckon I’ll turn butcher when things is dried up, and save hides, horns, and taller.”

I could not but admire this indomitable energy, which under softer climatic influences might have borne such goodly fruit.

“Have you any idea what you’ll do, Wise?” I ask.

“Thar ain’t much to do now,” says the practical young man. “I’ll have to lay over a spell, I reckon, till things comes straight. The land ain’t worth much now, and won’t be, I dessay, for some time. Wonder whar the ole man’ll drive stakes next.”

“I meant as to your father and George, Wise.”

"Oh, the ole man and I'll go on to 'Miles's,' whar Tom packed the old woman and babies last week. George'll turn up somewhar atween this and Altascar's, ef he ain't thar now."

I ask how the Altascars have suffered.

"Well, I reckon he ain't lost much in stock. I shouldn't wonder if George helped him drive 'em up the foot-hills. And his 'casa' 's built too high. Oh, thar ain't any water thar, you bet. Ah!" says Wise, with reflective admiration, "those Greasers ain't the darned fools people thinks 'em. I'll bet thar ain't one swamped out in all 'er Californy." But the appearance of "grub," cut this rhapsody short.

"I shall keep on a little farther," I say, "and try to find George."

Wise stared a moment at this eccentricity until a new light dawned upon him.

"I don't think you'll save much. What's the percentage, —workin' on shares, eh?"

I answer that I am only curious, which I feel lessens his opinion of me, and with a sadder feeling than his assurance of George's safety might warrant, I walked away.

From others whom we picked up from time to time we heard of George's self-sacrificing devotion, with the praises of the many he had helped and rescued. But I did not feel disposed to return until I had seen him, and soon prepared myself to take a boat to the lower "valda" of the foot-hills, and visit Altascar. I soon perfected my arrangements, bade farewell to Wise, and took a last look at the old man, who was sitting by the furnace fires quite passive and composed. Then our boat-head swung round, pulled by sturdy and willing hands.

It was again raining, and a disagreeable wind had risen. Our course lay nearly west, and we soon knew by the strong current that we were in the creek of the *Espíritu Santo*.

From time to time the wrecks of barns were seen, and we passed many half-submerged willows hung with farming implements.

We emerge at last into a broad silent sea. It is the "llano de Espíritu Santo." As the wind whistles by me, piling the shallower fresh water into mimic waves, I go back, in fancy, to the long ride of October over that boundless plain, and recall the sharp outlines of the distant hills which are now lost in the lowering clouds. The men are rowing silently, and I find my mind, released from its tension, growing benumbed and depressed as then. The water, too, is getting more shallow as we leave the banks of the creek, and with my hand dipped listlessly over the thwarts, I detect the tops of chimisal, which shows the tide to have somewhat fallen. There is a black mound, bearing to the north of the line of alder, making an adverse current, which, as we sweep to the right to avoid, I recognise. We pull close alongside, and I call to the men to stop.

There was a stake driven near its summit with the initials, "L. E. S. I." Tied half-way down was a curiously worked "riata." It was George's. It had been cut with some sharp instrument, and the loose gravelly soil of the mound was deeply dented with horse's hoofs. The stake was covered with horse-hairs. It was a record, but no clew.

The wind had grown more violent, as we still fought our way forward, resting and rowing by turns, and oftener "poling" the shallower surface, but the old "valda," or bench, is still distant. My recollection of the old survey enables me to guess the relative position of the meanderings of the creek, and an occasional simple professional experiment to determine the distance gives my crew the fullest faith in my ability. Night overtakes us in our impeded progress. Our condition looks more dangerous than it

really is, but I urge the men, many of whom are still new in this mode of navigation, to greater exertion by assurance of perfect safety and speedy relief ahead. We go on in this way until about eight o'clock, and ground by the willows. We have a muddy walk for a few hundred yards before we strike a dry trail, and simultaneously the white walls of Altascar's appear like a snow-bank before us. Lights are moving in the courtyard; but otherwise the old tomb-like repose characterises the building.

One of the peons recognised me as I entered the court, and Altascar met me on the corridor.

I was too weak to do more than beg his hospitality for the men who had dragged wearily with me. He looked at my hand, which still unconsciously held the broken "riata." I began, wearily, to tell him about George and my fears, but with a gentler courtesy than was even his wont, he gravely laid his hand on my shoulder.

"*Poco a poco*, Señor,—not now. You are tired, you have hunger, you have cold. Necessary it is you should have peace."

He took us into a small room and poured out some French cognac, which he gave to the men that had accompanied me. They drank and threw themselves before the fire in the larger room. The repose of the building was intensified that night, and I even fancied that the footsteps on the corridor were lighter and softer. The old Spaniard's habitual gravity was deeper; we might have been shut out from the world as well as the whistling storm, behind those ancient walls with their time-worn inheritor.

Before I could repeat my inquiry he retired. In a few minutes two smoking dishes of "chupa" with coffee were placed before us, and my men ate ravenously. I drank the coffee, but my excitement and weariness kept down the instincts of hunger.

I was sitting sadly by the fire when he re-entered.

"You have eat?"

I said, "Yes," to please him.

"*Bueno*, eat when you can,—food and appetite are not always."

He said this with that Sancho-like simplicity with which most of his countrymen utter a proverb, as though it were an experience rather than a legend, and, taking the "riata" from the floor, held it almost tenderly before him.

"It was made by me, Señor."

"I kept it as a clew to him, Don Altascar," I said. "If I could find him"—

"He is here."

"Here! and"—but I could not say, "well!" I understood the gravity of the old man's face, the hushed footfalls, the tomb-like repose of the building in an electric flash of consciousness; I held the clew to the broken riata at last. Altascar took my hand, and we crossed the corridor to a sombre apartment. A few tall candles were burning in sconces before the window.

In an alcove there was a deep bed with its counterpane, pillows, and sheets heavily edged with lace, in all that splendid luxury which the humblest of these strange people lavish upon this single item of their household. I stepped beside it and saw George lying, as I had seen him once before, peacefully at rest. But a greater sacrifice than that he had known was here, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

"He was honest and brave," said the old man, and turned away.

There was another figure in the room; a heavy shawl drawn over her graceful outline, and her long black hair hiding the hands that buried her downcast face. I did not

seem to notice her, and, retiring presently, left the loving and loved together.

When we were again beside the crackling fire, in the shifting shadows of the great chamber, Altascar told me how he had that morning met the horse of George Tryan swimming on the prairie ; how that, farther on, he found him lying, quite cold and dead, with no marks or bruises on his person ; that he had probably become exhausted in fording the creek, and that he had as probably reached the mound only to die for want of that help he had so freely given to others ; that, as a last act, he had freed his horse. These incidents were corroborated by many who collected in the great chamber that evening,—women and children, —most of them succoured through the devoted energies of him who lay cold and lifeless above.

He was buried in the Indian mound,—the single spot of strange perennial greenness, which the poor aborigines had raised above the dusty plain. A little slab of sandstone with the initials "G. T." is his monument, and one of the bearings of the initial corner of the new survey of the "Espíritu Santo Rancho."

## Waiting for the Ship.

### A FORT POINT IDYL.

ABOUT an hour's ride from the Plaza there is a high bluff with the ocean breaking uninterruptedly along its rocky beach. There are several cottages on the sands, which look as if they had recently been cast up by a heavy sea. The cultivated patch behind each tenement is fenced in by bamboos, broken spars, and driftwood. With its few green cabbages and turnip-tops, each garden looks something like an aquarium with the water turned off. In fact you would not be surprised to meet a merman digging among the potatoes, or a mermaid milking a sea-cow hard by.

Near this place formerly arose a great semaphoric telegraph, with its gaunt arms tossed up against the horizon. It has been replaced by an observatory, connected with an electric nerve to the heart of the great commercial city. From this point the incoming ships are signalled, and again checked off at the City Exchange. And while we are here looking for the expected steamer, let me tell you a story.

Not long ago, a simple, hard-working mechanic had amassed sufficient by diligent labour in the mines to send home for his wife and two children. He arrived in San Francisco a month before the time the ship was due, for he was a Western man, and had made the overland journey, and knew little of ships or seas or gales. He procured work in

the city, but as the time approached he would go to the shipping office regularly every day. The month passed, but the ship came not ; then a month and a week, two weeks, three weeks, two months, and then a year.

The rough, patient face, with soft lines overlying its hard features, which had become a daily apparition at the shipping agent's, then disappeared. It turned up one afternoon at the observatory as the setting sun relieved the operator from his duties. There was something so childlike and simple in the few questions asked by this stranger, touching his business, that the operator spent some time to explain. When the mystery of signals and telegraphs was unfolded, the stranger had one more question to ask. "How long might a vessel be absent before they would give up expecting her?" The operator couldn't tell ; it would depend on circumstances. Would it be a year? Yes, it might be a year, and vessels had been given up for lost after two years and had come home. The stranger put his rough hand on the operator's, and thanked him for his "troubil," and went away.

Still the ship came not. Stately clippers swept into the Gate, and merchantmen went by with colours flying, and the welcoming gun of the steamer often reverberated among the hills. Then the patient face, with the old resigned expression, but a brighter, wistful look in the eye, was regularly met on the crowded decks of the steamer as she disembarked her living freight. He may have had a dimly defined hope that the missing ones might yet come this way, as only another road over that strange unknown expanse. But he talked with ship captains and sailors, and even this last hope seemed to fail. When the careworn face and bright eyes were presented again at the observatory, the operator, busily engaged, could not spare time to answer foolish interrogatories, so he went away. But as night fell,

he was seen sitting on the rocks with his face turned seaward, and was seated there all that night.

When he became hopelessly insane, for that was what the physicians said made his eyes so bright and wistful, he was cared for by a fellow-craftsman who had known his troubles. He was allowed to indulge his fancy of going out to watch for the ship, in which she "and the children" were, at night when no one else was watching. He had made up his mind that the ship would come in at night. This, and the idea that he would relieve the operator, who would be tired with watching all day, seemed to please him. So he went out and relieved the operator every night !

For two years the ships came and went. He was there to see the outward-bound clipper, and greet her on her return. He was known only by a few who frequented the place. When he was missed at last from his accustomed spot, a day or two elapsed before any alarm was felt. One Sunday, a party of pleasure-seekers clambering over the rocks were attracted by the barking of a dog that had run on before them. When they came up they found a plainly dressed man lying there dead. There were a few papers in his pocket,—chiefly slips cut from different journals of old marine memoranda,—and his face was turned towards the distant sea.



*THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP*

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



## The Luck of Roaring Camp.

THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—*"Cherokee Sal."*

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse, and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathising womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the

half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen, also, that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The

term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, &c., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand ; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine-boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it ;" even that the child would survive ; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry,—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man ! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged ; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had

climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, for ever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men, who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency,—“Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy.” The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so unconsciously set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in comments were audible,—criticisms addressed perhaps rather to Stumpy in the character of showman:—“Is that him?” “Mighty small specimen;” “Hasn’t mor’n got the colour;” “Ain’t bigger nor a derringer.” The contributions were as characteristic:—A silver tobacco box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold

specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly-born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with perhaps more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely, and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the newcomer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had

gone to bed, he walked down to the river and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Half-way down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene!" replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprang up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog,—a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp, as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could

he prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety,—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But, when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got,—lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills,—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills,—that air pungent with balsamic odour, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating,—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophising the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "The Kid," "Stumpy's Boy," "The Coyote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "The d—d little cuss." But these were

felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the Church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't goin' to understand. And ef there's goin' to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humourists be it said that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so

help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been otherwise uttered than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived ; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle, packed eighty miles by mule, had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how 'The Luck' got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defence, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honour and privilege of holding The Luck. It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and

social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillising quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor from her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-oo-o-ard of the Arethusa." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding *The Luck*, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end,—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'ev'ingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days *The Luck* was usually carried to the gulch from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine-boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the

ditches below. Latterly there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of *Las Mariposas*. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for *The Luck*. It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be serenely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round grey eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral,"—a hedge of tessellated pine-boughs, which surrounded his bed,—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a talking to a jaybird as was a sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a jawin' at each other just like to cherrybums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine-boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking

at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gum; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble-bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times," and the luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of The Luck, who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely sceptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried

into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and débris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy, nearest the river-bank, was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, The Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man,

and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying!" he repeated; "he's a taking me with him. Tell the boys I've got The Luck with me now;" and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

## The Outcasts of Poker Flat.

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the 23d of November 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected; "likely it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard of two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a

sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. "It's agin justice," said Jim Wheeler, "to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp—an entire stranger—carry away our money." But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He was too much of a gambler not to accept fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognised the usual percentage in favour of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "The Duchess;" another who had won the title of "Mother Shipton;" and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice-robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly

and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good-humour characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, "Five Spot," for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of "Five Spot" with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foot-hills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had

camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent fellow-exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah-trade, his habits of life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him, at the sky ominously clouded, at the valley below, already deepening into shadow; and, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh,

open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognised Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent," of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a "little game," and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine-tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognise in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavoured to dissuade

Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a loghouse near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the cañon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine-trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire—for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast—in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. "Is this yer a d—d picnic?" said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine-trees and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine-boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard

above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it,—snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered; they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humoured, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians, and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snowflakes that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley and summed up the present and future in two words,—“Snowed in!”

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. “That is,” said Mr. Oakhurst, *so'to voce* to the

Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything," he added significantly, "and there's no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gaiety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine-boughs, extemporised a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through their professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whisky, which he had prudently *cached*. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whisky," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm and the group around it that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had *cached* his cards with the whisky as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say cards once" during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:—

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,  
And I'm bound to die in His army."

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had "often been a week without sleep." "Doing what?" asked Tom. "Poker!" replied Oakhurst sententiously. "When a man gets a streak of luck,—nigger-luck,—he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler,

reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat,—you come along, and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance—

" 'I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,  
And I'm bound to die in His army.' "

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts divide their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut,—a hopeless, uncharted, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the castaways still clung. Through the marvellously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. "Just you go out there and cuss, and see." She then set herself to the task of amusing "the child," as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and

long-drawn gasps by the flickering camp-fire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney,—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the "Iliad." He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as the Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So, with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken

and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," said the woman querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and showed him a pair of snowshoes, which he had fashioned from the old pack-saddle. "There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet," he said, pointing to Piney; "but it's there," he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. "If you can reach there in two days she's safe." "And you?" asked Tom Simson. "I'll stay here," was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. "You are not going, too?" said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. "As far as the cañon," he replied. He turned suddenly and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning, looking

into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke, but Piney, accepting the position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting pines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire, which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: "Piney, can you pray?" "No, dear," said Piney, simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine-boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told from the equal peace that dwelt upon them which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognised this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pine trees, they found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with

a bowie-knife. It bore the following, written in pencil in a firm hand :—

+

BENEATH THIS TREE

LIES THE BODY

OF

JOHN OAKHURST,

WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK

ON THE 23D OF NOVEMBER 1850,

AND

HANDED IN HIS CHECKS

ON THE 7TH DECEMBER 1850.

+

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who was at once the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

## Miggles.

WE were eight including the driver. We had not spoken during the passage of the last six miles, since the jolting of the heavy vehicle over the roughening road had spoiled the Judge's last poetical quotation. The tall man beside the Judge was asleep, his arm passed through the swaying strap and his head resting upon it,—altogether a limp, helpless looking object, as if he had hanged himself and been cut down too late. The French lady on the back seat was asleep too, yet in a half-conscious propriety of attitude, shown even in the disposition of the handkerchief which she held to her forehead and which partially veiled her face. The lady from Virginia City, travelling with her husband, had long since lost all individuality in a wild confusion of ribbons, veils, furs, and shawls. There was no sound but the rattling of wheels and the dash of rain upon the roof. Suddenly the stage stopped and we became dimly aware of voices. The driver was evidently in the midst of an exciting colloquy with some one in the road,—a colloquy of which such fragments as “bridge gone,” “twenty feet of water,” “can't pass,” were occasionally distinguishable above the storm. Then came a lull, and a mysterious voice from the road shouted the parting adjuration—

“Try Miggles's.”

We caught a glimpse of our leaders as the vehicle slowly turned, of a horseman vanishing through the rain, and we were evidently on our way to Miggles's.

Who and where was Miggles? The Judge, our authority, did not remember the name, and he knew the country thoroughly. The Washoe traveller thought Miggles must keep a hotel. We only knew that we were stopped by high water in front and rear, and that Miggles was our rock of refuge. A ten minutes' splashing through a tangled byroad, scarcely wide enough for the stage, and we drew up before a barred and boarded gate in a wide stone wall or fence about eight feet high. Evidently Miggles's, and evidently Miggles did not keep a hotel.

The driver got down and tried the gate. It was securely locked.

"Miggles! O Miggles!"

No answer.

"Migg-ells! You Miggles!" continued the driver, with rising wrath.

"Migglesy!" joined in the expressman persuasively.  
"O Miggy! Mig!"

But no reply came from the apparently insensate Miggles. The Judge, who had finally got the window down, put his head out and propounded a series of questions, which if answered categorically would have undoubtedly elucidated the whole mystery, but which the driver evaded by replying that "if we didn't want to sit in the coach all night we had better rise up and sing out for Miggles."

So we rose up and called on Miggles in chorus, then separately. And when we had finished, a Hibernian fellow-passenger from the roof called for "Maygells!" whereat we all laughed. While we were laughing the driver cried "Shoo!"

We listened. To our infinite amazement the chorus of "Miggles" was repeated from the other side of the wall, even to the final and supplemental "Maygells."

"Extraordinary echo!" said the Judge.

"Extraordinary d—d skunk!" roared the driver, contemptuously. "Come out of that, Miggles, and show yourself! Be a man, Miggles! Don't hide in the dark; I wouldn't if I were you, Miggles," continued Yuba Bill, now dancing about in an excess of fury.

"Miggles!" continued the voice, "O Miggles!"

"My good man! Mr. Myghail!" said the Judge, softening the asperities of the name as much as possible. "Consider the inhospitality of refusing shelter from the inclemency of the weather to helpless females. Really, my dear sir —— But a succession of "Miggles," ending in a burst of laughter, drowned his voice.

Yuba Bill hesitated no longer. Taking a heavy stone from the road, he battered down the gate, and with the expressman entered the enclosure. We followed. Nobody was to be seen. In the gathering darkness all that we could distinguish was that we were in a garden—from the rose-bushes that scattered over us a minute spray from their dripping leaves—and before a long, rambling wooden building.

"Do you know this Miggles?" asked the Judge of Yuba Bill.

"No, nor don't want to," said Bill shortly, who felt the Pioneer Stage Company insulted in his person by the contumacious Miggles.

"But, my dear sir," expostulated the Judge, as he thought of the barred gate.

"Lookee here," said Yuba Bill, with fine irony, "hadn't you better go back and sit in the coach till yer introduced? I'm going in," and he pushed open the door of the building.

A long room, lighted only by the embers of a fire that was dying on the large hearth at its farther extremity; the walls curiously papered, and the flickering firelight bringing

out its grotesque pattern ; somebody sitting in a large arm-chair by the fireplace. All this we saw as we crowded together into the room after the driver and expressman.

"Hello ! be you Miggles ?" said Yuba Bill to the solitary occupant.

The figure neither spoke nor stirred. Yuba Bill walked wrathfully toward it and turned the eye of his coach-lantern upon its face. It was a man's face, prematurely old and wrinkled, with very large eyes, in which there was that expression of perfectly gratuitous solemnity which I had sometimes seen in an owl's. The large eyes wandered from Bill's face to the lantern, and finally fixed their gaze on that luminous object without further recognition.

Bill restrained himself with an effort.

"Miggles ! be you deaf ? You ain't dumb anyhow, you know ?" and Yuba Bill shook the insensate figure by the shoulder.

To our great dismay, as Bill removed his hand, the venerable stranger apparently collapsed, sinking into half his size and an undistinguishable heap of clothing.

"Well, dern my skin," said Bill, looking appealingly at us, and hopelessly retiring from the contest.

The Judge now stepped forward, and we lifted the mysterious invertebrate back into his original position. Bill was dismissed with the lantern to reconnoitre outside, for it was evident that, from the helplessness of this solitary man, there must be attendants near at hand, and we all drew around the fire. The Judge, who had regained his authority, and had never lost his conversational amiability, —standing before us with his back to the hearth,—charged us, as an imaginary jury, as follows :—

"It is evident that either our distinguished friend here has reached that condition described by Shakespeare as 'the sere and yellow leaf,' or has suffered some premature

abatement of his mental and physical faculties. Whether he is really the Miggles"—

Here he was interrupted by "Miggles! O Miggles! Migglesy! Mig!" and, in fact, the whole chorus of Miggles in very much the same key as it had once before been delivered unto us.

We gazed at each other for a moment in some alarm. The Judge, in particular, vacated his position quickly, as the voice seemed to come directly over his shoulder. The cause, however, was soon discovered in a large magpie who was perched upon a shelf over the fireplace, and who immediately relapsed into a sepulchral silence, which contrasted singularly with his previous volubility. It was, undoubtedly, his voice which we had heard in the road, and our friend in the chair was not responsible for the discourtesy. Yuba Bill, who re-entered the room after an unsuccessful search, was loath to accept the explanation, and still eyed the helpless sitter with suspicion. He had found a shed in which he had put up his horses, but he came back dripping and sceptical. "Thar ain't nobody but him within ten mile of the shanty, and that 'ar d—d old sheesicks knows it."

But the faith of the majority proved to be securely based. Bill had scarcely ceased growling before we heard a quick step upon the porch, the trailing of a wet skirt, the door was flung open, and with a flash of white teeth, a sparkle of dark eyes, and an utter absence of ceremony or diffidence, a young woman entered, shut the door, and, panting, leaned back against it.

"Oh, if you please, I'm Miggles!"

And this was Miggles! this bright-eyed, full-throated young woman, whose wet gown of coarse blue stuff could not hide the beauty of the feminine curves to which it clung; from the chestnut crown of whose head, topped by a man's oil-skin sou'wester, to the little feet and ankles,

hidden somewhere in the recesses of her boy's brogans, all was grace ;—this was Miggles, laughing at us, too, in the most airy, frank, offhand manner imaginable.

"You see, boys," said she, quite out of breath, and holding one little hand against her side, quite unheeding the speechless discomfiture of our party or the complete demoralisation of Yuba Bill, whose features had relaxed into an expression of gratuitous and imbecile cheerfulness,—"You see, boys, I was mor'n two miles away when you passed down the road. I thought you might pull up here, and so I ran the whole way, knowing nobody was home but Jim,—and—and—I'm out of breath—and—that lets me out."

And here Miggles caught her dripping oil-skin hat from her head, with a mischievous swirl that scattered a shower of raindrops over us ; attempted to put back her hair ; dropped two hair-pins in the attempt ; laughed, and sat down beside Yuba Bill, with her hands crossed lightly on her lap.

The Judge recovered himself first and essayed an extravagant compliment.

"I'll trouble you for that har-pin," said Miggles gravely. Half-a-dozen hands were eagerly stretched forward ; the missing hair-pin was restored to its fair owner ; and Miggles, crossing the room, looked keenly in the face of the invalid. The solemn eyes looked back at hers with an expression we had never seen before. Life and intelligence seemed to struggle back into the rugged face. Miggles laughed again, —it was a singularly eloquent laugh,—and turned her black eyes and white teeth once more towards us.

"This afflicted person is"—hesitated the Judge.

"Jim !" said Miggles.

"Your father ?"

"No !"

"Brother ?"

"No!"

"Husband?"

Miggles darted a quick, half-defiant glance at the two lady passengers, who I had noticed did not participate in the general masculine admiration of Miggles, and said, gravely, "No; it's Jim!"

There was an awkward pause. The lady passengers moved closer to each other; the Washoe husband looked abstractedly at the fire, and the tall man apparently turned his eyes inward for self-support at this emergency. But Miggles's laugh, which was very infectious, broke the silence.

"Come," she said briskly, "you must be hungry. Who'll bear a hand to help me get tea?"

She had no lack of volunteers. In a few moments Yuba Bill was engaged like Caliban in bearing logs for this Miranda; the expressman was grinding coffee on the veranda; to myself the arduous duty of slicing bacon was assigned; and the Judge lent each man his good-humoured and voluble counsel. And when Miggles, assisted by the Judge and our Hibernian "deck-passenger," set the table with all the available crockery, we had become quite joyous, in spite of the rain that beat against windows, the wind that whirled down the chimney, the two ladies who whispered together in the corner, or the magpie, who uttered a satirical and croaking commentary on their conversation from his perch above. In the now bright, blazing fire we could see that the walls were papered with illustrated journals, arranged with feminine taste and discrimination. The furniture was extemporised and adapted from candle-boxes and packing-cases, and covered with gay calico or the skin of some animal. The arm-chair of the helpless Jim was an ingenious variation of a flour-barrel. There was neatness, and even a taste for the picturesque, to be seen in the few details of the long low room.

The meal was a culinary success. But more, it was a social triumph,—chiefly, I think, owing to the rare tact of Miggles in guiding the conversation, asking all the questions herself, yet bearing throughout a frankness that rejected the idea of any concealment on her own part, so that we talked of ourselves, of our prospects, of the journey, of the weather, of each other,—of everything but our host and hostess. It must be confessed that Miggles's conversation was never elegant, rarely grammatical, and that at times she employed expletives the use of which had generally been yielded to our sex. But they were delivered with such a lighting up of teeth and eyes, and were usually followed by a laugh—a laugh peculiar to Miggles—so frank and honest that it seemed to clear the moral atmosphere.

Once during the meal we heard a noise like the rubbing of a heavy body against the outer walls of the house. This was shortly followed by a scratching and sniffing at the door. "That's Joaquin," said Miggles, in reply to our questioning glances; "would you like to see him?" Before we could answer she had opened the door, and disclosed a half-grown grizzly, who instantly raised himself on his haunches, with his fore-paws hanging down in the popular attitude of mendicancy, and looked admiringly at Miggles, with a very singular resemblance in his manner to Yuba Bill. "That's my watch-dog," said Miggles, in explanation. "Oh, he don't bite," she added, as the two lady-passengers fluttered into a corner. "Does he, old Toppy?" (the latter remark being addressed directly to the sagacious Joaquin). "I tell you what, boys," continued Miggles, after she had fed and closed the door on *Ursa Minor*, "you were in big luck that Joaquin wasn't hanging round when you dropped in to-night." "Where was he?" asked the Judge. "With me," said Miggles. "Lord love you! he trots round with me nights like as if he was a man."

We were silent for a few moments, and listened to the wind. Perhaps we all had the same picture before us,—of Miggles walking through the rainy woods with her savage guardian at her side. The Judge, I remember, said something about Una and her lion ; but Miggles received it, as she did other compliments, with quiet gravity. Whether she was altogether unconscious of the admiration she excited,—she could hardly have been oblivious of Yuba Bill's adoration,—I know not ; but her very frankness suggested a perfect sexual equality that was cruelly humiliating to the younger members of our party.

The incident of the bear did not add anything in Miggles's favour to the opinions of those of her own sex who were present. In fact, the repast over, a chillness radiated from the two lady passengers that no pine-boughs brought in by Yuba Bill and cast as a sacrifice upon the hearth could wholly overcome. Miggles felt it ; and suddenly declaring that it was time to "turn in," offered to show the ladies to their bed in an adjoining room. "You, boys, will have to camp out here by the fire as well as you can," she added, "for thar ain't but the one room."

Our sex—by which, my dear sir, I allude of course to the stronger portion of humanity—has been generally relieved from the imputation of curiosity or a fondness for gossip. Yet I am constrained to say, that hardly had the door closed on Miggles than we crowded together, whispering, snickering, smiling, and exchanging suspicions, surmises, and a thousand speculations in regard to our pretty hostess and her singular companion. I fear that we even hustled that imbecile paralytic, who sat like a voiceless Memnon in our midst, gazing with the serene indifference of the Past in his passionless eyes upon our wordy counsels. In the midst of an exciting discussion the door opened again and Miggles re-entered.

But not, apparently, the same Miggles who a few hours before had flashed upon us. Her eyes were downcast, and as she hesitated for a moment on the threshold, with a blanket on her arm, she seemed to have left behind her the frank fearlessness which had charmed us a moment before. Coming into the room, she drew a low stool beside the paralytic's chair, sat down, drew the blanket over her shoulders, and saying, "If it's all the same to you, boys, as we're rather crowded, I'll stop here to-night," took the invalid's withered hand in her own, and turned her eyes upon the dying fire. An instinctive feeling that this was only premonitory to more confidential relations, and perhaps some shame at our previous curiosity, kept us silent. The rain still beat upon the roof, wandering gusts of wind stirred the embers into momentary brightness, until, in a lull of the elements, Miggles suddenly lifted up her head, and, throwing her hair over her shoulder, turned her face upon the group and asked—

"Is there any of you that knows me?"

There was no reply.

"Think again! I lived at Marysville in '53. Everybody knew me there, and everybody had the right to know me. I kept the Polka Saloon until I came to live with Jim. That's six years ago. Perhaps I've changed some."

The absence of recognition may have disconcerted her. She turned her head to the fire again, and it was some seconds before she again spoke, and then more rapidly—

"Well, you see I thought some of you must have known me. There's no great harm done anyway. What I was going to say was this: Jim here"—she took his hand in both of hers as she spoke—"used to know me, if you didn't, and spent a heap of money upon me. I reckon he spent all he had. And one day—it's six years ago this winter—Jim came into my back-room, sat down on my

sofy, like as you see him in that chair, and never moved again without help. He was struck all of a heap, and never seemed to know what ailed him. The doctors came and said as how it was caused all along of his way of life,—for Jim was mighty free and wild like,—and that he would never get better, and couldn't last long anyway. They advised me to send him to Frisco to the hospital, for he was no good to any one and would be a baby all his life. Perhaps it was something in Jim's eye, perhaps it was that I never had a baby, but I said 'No.' I was rich then, for I was popular with everybody,—gentlemen like yourself, sir, came to see me,—and I sold out my business and bought this yer place, because it was sort of out of the way of travel, you see, and I brought my baby here."

With a woman's intuitive tact and poetry, she had, as she spoke, slowly shifted her position so as to bring the mute figure of the ruined man between her and her audience, hiding in the shadow behind it, as if she offered it as a tacit apology for her actions. Silent and expressionless, it yet spoke for her; helpless, crushed, and smitten with the Divine thunderbolt, it still stretched an invisible arm around her.

Hidden in the darkness, but still holding his hand, she went on—

"It was a long time before I could get the hang of things about yer, for I was used to company and excitement. I couldn't get any woman to help me, and a man I dursn't trust; but what with the Indians hereabout, who'd do odd jobs for me, and having everything sent from the North Fork, Jim and I managed to worry through. The Doctor would run up from Sacramento once in a while. He'd ask to see 'Miggles's baby,' as he called Jim, and when he'd go away, he'd say, 'Miggles, you're a trump,—God bless you;' and it didn't seem so lonely after that. But the last

time he was here he said, as he opened the door to go, 'Do you know, Miggles, your baby will grow up to be a man yet and an honour to his mother; but not here, Miggles, not here!' And I thought he went away sad,—and—and"—— and here Miggles's voice and head were somehow both lost completely in the shadow.

"The folks about here are very kind," said Miggles, after a pause, coming a little into the light again. "The men from the Fork used to hang around here, until they found they wasn't wanted, and the women are kind, and don't call. I was pretty lonely until I picked up Joaquin in the woods yonder one day, when he wasn't so high, and taught him to beg for his dinner; and then thar's Polly—that's the magpie—she knows no end of tricks, and makes it quite sociable of evenings with her talk, and so I don't feel like as I was the only living being about the ranch. And Jim here," said Miggles, with her old laugh again, and coming out quite into the firelight, "Jim—why, boys, you would admire to see how much he knows for a man like him. Sometimes I bring him flowers, and he looks at 'em just as natural as if he knew 'em; and times, when we're sitting alone, I read him those things on the wall. Why, Lord!" said Miggles, with her frank laugh, "I've read him that whole side of the house this winter. There never was such a man for reading as Jim."

"Why," asked the Judge, "do you not marry this man to whom you have devoted your youthful life?"

"Well, you see," said Miggles, "it would be playing it rather low down on Jim to take advantage of his being so helpless. And then, too, if we were man and wife, now, we'd both know that I was *bound* to do what I do now of my own accord."

"But you are young yet and attractive"——

"It's getting late," said Miggles, gravely, "and you'd

better all turn in. Good-night, boys;" and throwing the blanket over her head, Miggles laid herself down beside Jim's chair, her head pillowed on the low stool that held his feet, and spoke no more. The fire slowly faded from the hearth; we each sought our blankets in silence; and presently there was no sound in the long room but the pattering of the rain upon the roof and the heavy breathing of the sleepers.

It was nearly morning when I awoke from a troubled dream. The storm had passed, the stars were shining, and through the shutterless window the full moon, lifting itself over the solemn pines without, looked into the room. It touched the lonely figure in the chair with an infinite compassion, and seemed to baptize with a shining flood the lowly head of the woman whose hair, as in the sweet old story, bathed the feet of him she loved. It even lent a kindly poetry to the rugged outline of Yuba Bill, half reclining on his elbow between them and his passengers, with savagely patient eyes keeping watch and ward. And then I fell asleep and only woke at broad day, with Yuba Bill standing over me, and "All aboard" ringing in my ears.

Coffee was waiting for us on the table, but Miggles was gone. We wandered about the house and lingered long after the horses were harnessed, but she did not return. It was evident that she wished to avoid a formal leave-taking, and had so left us to depart as we had come. After we had helped the ladies into the coach, we returned to the house and solemnly shook hands with the paralytic Jim, as solemnly settling him back into position after each hand-shake. Then we looked for the last time around the long low room, at the stool where Miggles had sat, and slowly took our seats in the waiting coach. The whip cracked, and we were off!

But as we reached the highroad, Bill's dexterous hand

laid the six horses back on their haunches, and the stage stopped with a jerk. For there, on a little eminence beside the road, stood Miggles, her hair flying, her eyes sparkling, her white handkerchief waving, and her white teeth flashing a last "good-bye." We waved our hats in return. And then Yuba Bill, as if fearful of further fascination, madly lashed his horses forward, and we sank back in our seats. We exchanged not a word until we reached the North Fork and the stage drew up at the Independence House. Then, the Judge leading, we walked into the bar-room and took our places gravely at the bar.

"Are your glasses charged, gentlemen?" said the Judge, solemnly taking off his white hat.

They were.

"Well, then, here's to *Miggles*—GOD BLESS HER!"

Perhaps He had. Who knows?

## Tennessee's Partner.

I DO not think that we ever knew his real name. Our ignorance of it certainly never gave us any social inconvenience, for at Sandy Bar in 1854 most men were christened anew. Sometimes these appellatives were derived from some distinctiveness of dress, as in the case of "Dungaree Jack;" or from some peculiarity of habit, as shown in "Saleratus Bill," so called from an undue proportion of that chemical in his daily bread; or from some unlucky slip, as exhibited in "The Iron Pirate," a mild, inoffensive man, who earned that baleful title by his unfortunate mispronunciation of the term "iron pyrites." Perhaps this may have been the beginning of a rude heraldry; but I am constrained to think that it was because a man's real name in that day rested solely upon his own unsupported statement. "Call yourself Clifford, do you?" said Boston, addressing a timid newcomer with infinite scorn; "hell is full of such Cliffords!" He then introduced the unfortunate man, whose name happened to be really Clifford, as "Jaybird Charley,"—an unhallowed inspiration of the moment that clung to him ever after.

But to return to Tennessee's Partner, whom we never knew by any other than this relative title. That he had ever existed as a separate and distinct individuality we only learned later. It seems that in 1853 he left Poker Flat to go to San Francisco, ostensibly to procure a wife. He

never got any farther than Stockton. At that place he was attracted by a young person who waited upon the table at the hotel where he took his meals. One morning he said something to her which caused her to smile not unkindly, to somewhat coquettishly break a plate of toast over his upturned, serious, simple face, and to retreat to the kitchen. He followed her, and emerged a few moments later, covered with more toast and victory. That day week they were married by a Justice of the Peace, and returned to Poker Flat. I am aware that something more might be made of this episode, but I prefer to tell it as it was current at Sandy Bar,—in the gulches and bar-rooms,—where all sentiment was modified by a strong sense of humour.

Of their married felicity but little is known, perhaps for the reason that Tennessee, then living with his partner, one day took occasion to say something to the bride on his own account, at which, it is said, she smiled not unkindly and chastely retreated,—this time as far as Marysville, where Tennessee followed her, and where they went to housekeeping without the aid of a Justice of the Peace. Tennessee's Partner took the loss of his wife simply and seriously, as was his fashion. But to everybody's surprise, when Tennessee one day returned from Marysville, without his partner's wife,—she having smiled and retreated with somebody else,—Tennessee's Partner was the first man to shake his hand and greet him with affection. The boys who had gathered in the cañon to see the shooting were naturally indignant. Their indignation might have found vent in sarcasm but for a certain look in Tennessee's Partner's eye that indicated a lack of humorous appreciation. In fact, he was a grave man, with a steady application to practical detail which was unpleasant in a difficulty.

Meanwhile a popular feeling against Tennessee had grown up on the Bar. He was known to be a gambler; he was

suspected to be a thief. In these suspicions Tennessee's Partner was equally compromised ; his continued intimacy with Tennessee after the affair above quoted could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of a copartnership of crime. At last Tennessee's guilt became flagrant. One day he overtook a stranger on his way to Red Dog. The stranger afterward related that Tennessee beguiled the time with interesting anecdote and reminiscence, but illogically concluded the interview in the following words: "And now, young man, I'll trouble you for your knife, your pistols, and your money. You see your weppings might get you into trouble at Red Dog, and your money's a temptation to the evilly disposed. I think you said your address was San Francisco. I shall endeavour to call." It may be stated here that Tennessee had a fine flow of humour, which no business preoccupation could wholly subdue.

This exploit was his last. Red Dog and Sandy Bar made common cause against the highwayman. Tennessee was hunted in very much the same fashion as his prototype, the grizzly. As the toils closed around him, he made a desperate dash through the Bar, emptying his revolver at the crowd before the Arcade Saloon, and so on up Grizzly Cañon ; but at its farther extremity he was stopped by a small man on a grey horse. The men looked at each other a moment in silence. Both were fearless, both self-possessed and independent, and both types of a civilisation that in the seventeenth century would have been called heroic, but in the nineteenth simply "reckless." "What have you got there?—I call," said Tennessee quietly. "Two bowers and an ace," said the stranger as quietly, showing two revolvers and a bowie-knife. "That takes me," returned Tennessee ; and, with this gambler's epigram, he threw away his useless pistol and rode back with his captor.

It was a warm night. The cool breeze which usually sprang up with the going down of the sun behind the *chaparral*-crested mountain was that evening withheld from Sandy Bar. The little cañon was stifling with heated resinous odours, and the decaying driftwood on the Bar sent forth faint sickening exhalations. The feverishness of day and its fierce passions still filled the camp. Lights moved restlessly along the bank of the river, striking no answering reflection from its tawny current. Against the blackness of the pines the windows of the old loft above the express-office stood out staringly bright ; and through their curtainless panes the loungers below could see the forms of those who were even then deciding the fate of Tennessee. And above all this, etched on the dark firmament, rose the Sierra, remote and passionless, crowned with remoter passionless stars.

The trial of Tennessee was conducted as fairly as was consistent with a judge and jury who felt themselves to some extent obliged to justify, in their verdict, the previous irregularities of arrest and indictment. The law of Sandy Bar was implacable but not vengeful. The excitement and personal feeling of the chase were over ; with Tennessee safe in their hands, they were ready to listen patiently to any defence, which they were already satisfied was insufficient. There being no doubt in their own minds, they were willing to give the prisoner the benefit of any that might exist. Secure in the hypothesis that he ought to be hanged on general principles, they indulged him with more latitude of defence than his reckless hardihood seemed to ask. The Judge appeared to be more anxious than the prisoner, who, otherwise unconcerned, evidently took a grim pleasure in the responsibility he had created. "I don't take any hand in this yer game," had been his invariable but good-humoured reply to all questions. The Judge

—who was also his captor—for a moment vaguely regretted that he had not shot him “on sight” that morning, but presently dismissed this human weakness as unworthy of the judicial mind. Nevertheless, when there was a tap at the door, and it was said that Tennessee’s Partner was there on behalf of the prisoner, he was admitted at once without question. Perhaps the younger members of the jury, to whom the proceedings were becoming irksomely thoughtful, hailed him as a relief.

For he was not, certainly, an imposing figure. Short and stout, with a square face, sunburned into a preternatural redness, clad in a loose duck “jumper” and trousers streaked and splashed with red soil, his aspect under any circumstances would have been quaint, and was now even ridiculous. As he stooped to deposit at his feet a heavy carpet-bag he was carrying, it became obvious, from partially developed legends and inscriptions, that the material with which his trousers had been patched had been originally intended for a less ambitious covering. Yet he advanced with great gravity, and after shaking the hand of each person in the room with laboured cordiality, he wiped his serious perplexed face on a red bandanna handkerchief, a shade lighter than his complexion, laid his powerful hand upon the table to steady himself, and thus addressed the Judge:—

“I was passin’ by,” he began, by way of apology, “and I thought I’d just step in and see how things was gittin’ on with Tennessee thar,—my pardner. It’s a hot night. I disremember any sich weather before on the Bar.”

He paused a moment, but nobody volunteering any other meteorological recollection, he again had recourse to his pocket-handkerchief, and for some moments mopped his face diligently.

“Have you anything to say on behalf of the prisoner,” said the Judge finally.

"Thet's it," said Tennessee's Partner, in a tone of relief. "I come yar as Tennessee's pardner,—knowing him nigh on four year, off and on, wet and dry, in luck and out o' luck. His ways ain't aller my ways, but thar ain't any p'int in that young man, thar ain't any liveliness as he's been up to, as I don't know. And you sez to me, sez you,—confidential-like, and between man and man,—sez you, 'Do you know anything in his behalf?' and I sez to you, sez I—confidential like, as between man and man,—'What should a man know of his pardner?'"

"Is this all you have to say?" asked the Judge impatiently, feeling, perhaps, that a dangerous sympathy of humour was beginning to humanise the court.

"Thet's so," continued Tennessee's Partner. "It ain't for me to say anything agin' him. And now, what's the case? Here's Tennessee wants money, wants it bad, and doesn't like to ask it of his old pardner. Well, what does Tennessee do? He lays for a stranger and he fetches that stranger; and you lays for *him* and you fetches *him*; and the honours is easy. And I put it to you, bein' a far-minded man, and to you, gentlemen all, as far-minded men, ef this isn't so."

"Prisoner," said the Judge, interrupting, "have you any questions to ask this man?"

"No! no!" continued Tennessee's Partner hastily. "I play this yer hand alone. To come down to the bed-rock, it's just this: Tennessee, thar, has played it pretty rough and expensive-like on a stranger, and on this yer camp. And now, what's the fair thing? Some would say more, some would say less. Here's seventeen hundred dollars in coarse gold and a watch,—it's about all my pile,—and call it square!" And before a hand could be raised to prevent him, he had emptied the contents of the carpet-bag upon the table.

For a moment his life was in jeopardy. One or two men sprang to their feet, several hands groped for hidden weapons, and a suggestion to "throw him from the window" was only overridden by a gesture from the Judge. Tennessee laughed. And apparently oblivious of the excitement, Tennessee's Partner improved the opportunity to mop his face again with his handkerchief.

When order was restored, and the man was made to understand, by the use of forcible figures and rhetoric, that Tennessee's offence could not be condoned by money, his face took a more serious and sanguinary hue, and those who were nearest to him noticed that his rough hand trembled slightly on the table. He hesitated a moment as he slowly returned the gold to the carpet-bag, as if he had not yet entirely caught the elevated sense of justice which swayed the tribunal, and was perplexed with the belief that he had not offered enough. Then he turned to the Judge, and saying, "This yer is a lone hand, played alone, and without my pardner," he bowed to the jury and was about to withdraw, when the Judge called him back. "If you have anything to say to Tennessee, you had better say it now." For the first time that evening the eyes of the prisoner and his strange advocate met. Tennessee smiled, showed his white teeth, and saying, "Euchred, old man!" held out his hand. Tennessee's Partner took it in his own, and saying, "I just dropped in as I was passin' to see how things was gettin' on," let the hand passively fall, and adding that "it was a warm night," again mopped his face with his handkerchief, and without another word withdrew.

The two men never again met each other alive. For the unparalleled insult of a bribe offered to Judge Lynch—who, whether bigoted, weak, or narrow, was at least incorruptible—firmly fixed in the mind of that mythical personage any wavering determination of Tennessee's fate; and at the

break of day he was marched, closely guarded, to meet it at the top of Marley's Hill.

How he met it, how cool he was, how he refused to say anything, how perfect were the arrangements of the committee, were all duly reported, with the addition of a warning moral and example to all future evildoers, in the *Red Dog Clarion* by its editor, who was present, and to whose vigorous English I cheerfully refer the reader. But the beauty of that midsummer morning, the blessed amity of earth and air and sky, the awakened life of the free woods and hills, the joyous renewal and promise of Nature, and above all, the infinite serenity that thrilled through each, was not reported, as not being a part of the social lesson. And yet, when the weak and foolish deed was done, and a life, with its possibilities and responsibilities, had passed out of the misshapen thing that dangled between earth and sky, the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, the sun shone, as cheerily as before ; and possibly the *Red Dog Clarion* was right.

Tennessee's Partner was not in the group that surrounded the ominous tree. But as they turned to disperse, attention was drawn to the singular appearance of a motionless donkey-cart halted at the side of the road. As they approached, they at once recognised the venerable "Jenny" and the two-wheeled cart as the property of Tennessee's Partner, used by him in carrying dirt from his claim ; and a few paces distant the owner of the equipage himself, sitting under a buckeye-tree, wiping the perspiration from his glowing face. In answer to an inquiry, he said he had come for the body of the "diseased," "if it was all the same to the committee." He didn't wish to "hurry anything ;" he could "wait." He was not working that day ; and when the gentlemen were done with the "diseased," he would take him. "Ef thar is any present," he added, in

his simple, serious way, "as would care to jine in the fun'l, they kin come." Perhaps it was from a sense of humour, which I have already intimated was a feature of Sandy Bar, —perhaps it was from something even better than that, but two-thirds of the loungers accepted the invitation at once.

It was noon when the body of Tennessee was delivered into the hands of his partner. As the cart drew up to the fatal tree, we noticed that it contained a rough oblong box, —apparently made from a section of sluicing,—and half filled with bark and the tassels of pine. The cart was further decorated with slips of willow and made fragrant with buckeye-blossoms. When the body was deposited in the box, Tennessee's Partner drew over it a piece of tarred canvas, and gravely mounting the narrow seat in front, with his feet upon the shafts, urged the little donkey forward. The equipage moved slowly on, at that decorous pace which was habitual with "Jenny" even under less solemn circumstances. The men—half curiously, half jestingly, but all good-humouredly—strolled along beside the cart, some in advance, some a little in the rear of the homely catafalque. But whether from the narrowing of the road or some present sense of decorum, as the cart passed on the company fell to the rear in couples, keeping step, and otherwise assuming the external show of a formal procession. Jack Folinsbee, who had at the outset played a funeral march in dumb show upon an imaginary trombone, desisted from a lack of sympathy and appreciation,—not having, perhaps, your true humourist's capacity to be content with the enjoyment of his own fun.

The way led through Grizzly Cañon, by this time clothed in funereal drapery and shadows. The redwoods, burying their moccasined feet in the red soil, stood in Indian-file along the track, trailing an uncouth benediction from their bending boughs upon the passing bier. A hare,

surprised into helpless inactivity, sat upright and pulsating in the ferns by the roadside as the *cortège* went by. Squirrels hastened to gain a secure outlook from higher boughs; and the blue-jays, spreading their wings, fluttered before them like outriders, until the outskirts of Sandy Bar were reached, and the solitary cabin of Tennessee's Partner.

Viewed under more favourable circumstances, it would not have been a cheerful place. The unpicturesque site, the rude and unlovely outlines, the unsavoury details, which distinguish the nest-building of the California miner, were all here with the dreariness of decay superadded. A few paces from the cabin there was a rough enclosure, which, in the brief days of Tennessee's Partner's matrimonial felicity, had been used as a garden, but was now overgrown with fern. As we approached it, we were surprised to find that what we had taken for a recent attempt at cultivation was the broken soil about an open grave.

The cart was halted before the enclosure, and rejecting the offers of assistance with the same air of simple self-reliance he had displayed throughout, Tennessee's Partner lifted the rough coffin on his back, and deposited it unaided within the shallow grave. He then nailed down the board which served as a lid, and mounting the little mound of earth beside it, took off his hat and slowly mopped his face with his handkerchief. This the crowd felt was a preliminary to speech, and they disposed themselves variously on stumps and boulders, and sat expectant.

"When a man," began Tennessee's Partner slowly, "has been running free all day, what's the natural thing for him to do? Why, to come home. And if he ain't in a condition to go home, what can his best friend do? Why, bring him home. And here's Tennessee has been running free, and we brings him home from his wandering." He paused and picked up a fragment of quartz, rubbed it thoughtfully

on his sleeve, and went on: "It ain't the first time that I've packed him on my back, as you see'd me now. It ain't the first time that I brought him to this yer cabin when he couldn't help himself; it ain't the first time that I and 'Jinny' have waited for him on yon hill, and picked him up and so fetched him home, when he couldn't speak and didn't know me. And now that it's the last time, why"—he paused and rubbed the quartz gently on his sleeve—"you see it's sort of rough on his pardner. And now, gentlemen," he added abruptly, picking up his long-handled shovel, "the fun'l's over; and my thanks, and Tennessee's thanks, to you for your trouble."

Resisting any proffers of assistance, he began to fill in the grave, turning his back upon the crowd, that after a few moments' hesitation gradually withdrew. As they crossed the little ridge that hid Sandy Bar from view, some, looking back, thought they could see Tennessee's Partner, his work done, sitting upon the grave, his shovel between his knees, and his face buried in his red bandanna handkerchief. But it was argued by others that you couldn't tell his face from his handkerchief at that distance, and this point remained undecided.

In the reaction that followed the feverish excitement of that day, Tennessee's Partner was not forgotten. A secret investigation had cleared him of any complicity in Tennessee's guilt, and left only a suspicion of his general sanity. Sandy Bar made a point of calling on him, and proffering various uncouth but well-meant kindnesses. But from that day his rude health and great strength seemed visibly to decline; and when the rainy season fairly set in, and the tiny grass-blades were beginning to peep from the rocky mound above Tennessee's grave, he took to his bed.

One night, when the pines beside the cabin were swaying in the storm and trailing their slender fingers over the roof,

and the roar and rush of the swollen river were heard below, Tennessee's Partner lifted his head from the pillow, saying, "It is time to go for Tennessee; I must put 'Jinny,' in the cart;" and would have risen from his bed but for the restraint of his attendant. Struggling, he still pursued his singular fancy: "There, now, steady, 'Jinny,'—steady, old girl. How dark it is! Look out for the ruts,—and look out for him, too, old gal. Sometimes, you know, when he's blind drunk, he drops down right in the trail. Keep on straight up to the pine on the top of the hill. Thar! I told you so!—thar he is,—coming this way, too,—all by himself, sober, and his face a-shining. Tennessee! Pardner!"

And so they met.

## The Idyl of Red Gulch.

SANDY was very drunk. He was lying under an azalea bush, in pretty much the same attitude in which he had fallen some hours before. How long he had been lying there he could not tell, and didn't care ; how long he should lie there was a matter equally indefinite and unconsidered. A tranquil philosophy, born of his physical condition, suffused and saturated his moral being.

The spectacle of a drunken man, and of this drunken man in particular, was not, I grieve to say, of sufficient novelty in Red Gulch to attract attention. Earlier in the day some local satirist had erected a temporary tombstone at Sandy's head, bearing the inscription, "Effects of McCorkle's whisky,—kills at forty rods," with a hand pointing to McCorkle's saloon. But this, I imagine, was, like most local satire, personal ; and was a reflection upon the unfairness of the process rather than a commentary upon the impropriety of the result. With this facetious exception, Sandy had been undisturbed. A wandering mule, released from his pack, had cropped the scant herbage beside him, and sniffed curiously at the prostrate man ; a vagabond dog, with that deep sympathy which the species have for drunken men, had licked his dusty boots and curled himself up at his feet, and lay there, blinking one eye in the sunlight, with a simulation of dissipation that was in-

genious and dog-like in its implied flattery of the unconscious man beside him.

Meanwhile the shadows of the pine trees had slowly swung around until they crossed the road, and their trunks barred the open meadow with gigantic parallels of black and yellow. Little puffs of red dust, lifted by the plunging hoofs of passing teams, dispersed in a grimy shower upon the recumbent man. The sun sank lower and lower, and still Sandy stirred not. And then the repose of this philosopher was disturbed, as other philosophers have been, by the intrusion of an unphilosophical sex.

"Miss Mary," as she was known to the little flock that she had just dismissed from the log schoolhouse beyond the pines, was taking her afternoon walk. Observing an unusually fine cluster of blossoms on the azalea bush opposite, she crossed the road to pluck it, picking her way through the red dust, not without certain fierce little shivers of disgust and some feline circumlocution. And then she came suddenly upon Sandy!

Of course she uttered the little *staccato* cry of her sex. But when she had paid that tribute to her physical weakness she became overbold and halted for a moment,—at least six feet from this prostrate monster,—with her white skirts gathered in her hand, ready for flight. But neither sound nor motion came from the bush. With one little foot she then overturned the satirical headboard, and muttered "Beasts!"—an epithet which probably, at that moment, conveniently classified in her mind the entire male population of Red Gulch. For Miss Mary being possessed of certain rigid notions of her own, had not, perhaps, properly appreciated the demonstrative gallantry for which the Californian has been so justly celebrated by his brother Californians, and had, as a newcomer, perhaps fairly earned the reputation of being "stuck up."

As she stood there she noticed, also, that the slant sunbeams were heating Sandy's head to what she judged to be an unhealthy temperature, and that his hat was lying uselessly at his side. To pick it up and to place it over his face was a work requiring some courage, particularly as his eyes were open. Yet she did it and made good her retreat. But she was somewhat concerned, on looking back, to see that the hat was removed, and that Sandy was sitting up and saying something.

The truth was, that in the calm depths of Sandy's mind he was satisfied that the rays of the sun were beneficial and healthful; that from childhood he had objected to lying down in a hat; that no people but condemned fools, past redemption, ever wore hats; and that his right to dispense with them when he pleased was inalienable. This was the statement of his inner consciousness. Unfortunately, its outward expression was vague, being limited to a repetition of the following formula:—"Su'shine all ri! Wasser maar, eh? Wass up, su'shine?"

Miss Mary stopped, and, taking fresh courage from her vantage of distance, asked him if there was anything that he wanted.

"Wass up? Wasser maar?" continued Sandy, in a very high key.

"Get up, you horrid man!" said Miss Mary, now thoroughly incensed; "get up and go home."

Sandy staggered to his feet. He was six feet high, and Miss Mary trembled. He started forward a few paces and then stopped.

"Wass I go home for?" he suddenly asked, with great gravity.

"Go and take a bath," replied Miss Mary, eying his grimy person with great disfavour.

To her infinite dismay, Sandy suddenly pulled off his

coat and vest, threw them on the ground, kicked off his boots, and, plunging wildly forward, darted headlong over the hill in the direction of the river.

"Goodness Heavens! the man will be drowned!" said Miss Mary; and then, with feminine inconsistency, she ran back to the schoolhouse and locked herself in.

That night, while seated at supper with her hostess, the blacksmith's wife, it came to Miss Mary to ask, demurely, if her husband ever got drunk. "Abner," responded Mrs. Stidger reflectively, "let's see! Abner hasn't been tight since last 'lection." Miss Mary would have liked to ask if he preferred lying in the sun on these occasions, and if a cold bath would have hurt him; but this would have involved an explanation, which she did not then care to give. So she contented herself with opening her grey eyes widely at the red-cheeked Mrs. Stidger,—a fine specimen of South-Western efflorescence,—and then dismissed the subject altogether. The next day she wrote to her dearest friend in Boston: "I think I find the intoxicated portion of this community the least objectionable. I refer, my dear, to the men, of course. I do not know anything that could make the women tolerable."

In less than a week Miss Mary had forgotten this episode, except that her afternoon walks took thereafter, almost unconsciously, another direction. She noticed, however, that every morning a fresh cluster of azalea blossoms appeared among the flowers on her desk. This was not strange, as her little flock were aware of her fondness for flowers, and invariably kept her desk bright with anemones, syringas, and lupines; but, on questioning them, they one and all professed ignorance of the azaleas. A few days later, Master Johnny Stidger, whose desk was nearest to the window, was suddenly taken with spasms of apparently gratuitous laughter, that threatened the discipline of the

school. All that Miss Mary could get from him was, that some one had been "looking in the winder." Irate and indignant, she sallied from her hive to do battle with the intruder. As she turned the corner of the schoolhouse she came plump upon the quondam drunkard, now perfectly sober, and inexpressibly sheepish and guilty-looking.

These facts Miss Mary was not slow to take a feminine advantage of, in her present humour. But it was somewhat confusing to observe, also, that the beast, despite some faint signs of past dissipation, was amiable looking,—in fact, a kind of blonde Samson, whose corn-coloured silken beard apparently had never yet known the touch of barber's razor or Delilah's shears. So that the cutting speech which quivered on her ready tongue died upon her lips, and she contented herself with receiving his stammering apology with supercilious eyelids and the gathered skirts of uncontamination. When she re-entered the schoolroom, her eyes fell upon the azaleas with a new sense of revelation; and then she laughed, and the little people all laughed, and they were all unconsciously very happy.

It was on a hot day—and not long after this—that two short-legged boys came to grief on the threshold of the school with a pail of water, which they had laboriously brought from the spring, and that Miss Mary compassionately seized the pail and started for the spring herself. At the foot of the hill a shadow crossed her path, and a blue-shirted arm dexterously but gently relieved her of her burden. Miss Mary was both embarrassed and angry. "If you carried more of that for yourself," she said spitefully to the blue arm, without deigning to raise her lashes to its owner, "you'd do better." In the submissive silence that followed she regretted the speech, and thanked him so sweetly at the door that he stumbled. Which caused the children to laugh again,—a laugh in which Miss Mary

joined, until the colour came faintly into her pale cheek. The next day a barrel was mysteriously placed beside the door, and as mysteriously filled with fresh spring-water every morning.

Nor was this superior young person without other quiet attentions. "Profane Bill," driver of the Slumgullion Stage, widely known in the newspapers for his "gallantry" in invariably offering the box-seat to the fair sex, had excepted Miss Mary from this attention, on the ground that he had a habit of "cussin' on up grades," and gave her half the coach to herself. Jack Hamlin, a gambler, having once silently ridden with her in the same coach, afterward threw a decanter at the head of a confederate for mentioning her name in a bar-room. The over-dressed mother of a pupil whose paternity was doubtful had often lingered near this astute Vestal's temple, never daring to enter its sacred precincts, but content to worship the priestess from afar.

With such unconscious intervals the monotonous procession of blue skies, glittering sunshine, brief twilights, and starlit nights passed over Red Gulch. Miss Mary grew fond of walking in the sedate and proper woods. Perhaps she believed, with Mrs. Stidger, that the balsamic odours of the firs "did her chest good," for certainly her slight cough was less frequent and her step was firmer; perhaps she had learned the unending lesson which the patient pines are never weary of repeating to heedful or listless ears. And so one day she planned a picnic on Buckeye Hill, and took the children with her. Away from the dusty road, the straggling shanties, the yellow ditches, the clamour of restless engines, the cheap finery of shop-windows, the deeper glitter of paint and coloured glass, and the thin veneering which barbarism takes upon itself in such localities, what infinite relief was theirs! The last heap of ragged rock and

clay passed, the last unsightly chasm crossed,—how the waiting woods opened their long files to receive them! How the children—perhaps because they had not yet grown quite away from the breast of the bounteous Mother—threw themselves face downward on her brown bosom with uncouth caresses, filling the air with their laughter; and how Miss Mary herself—felinely fastidious and intrenched as she was in the purity of spotless skirts, collar, and cuffs—forgot all, and ran like a crested quail at the head of her brood, until, romping, laughing, and panting, with a loosened braid of brown hair, a hat hanging by a knotted ribbon from her throat, she came suddenly and violently, in the heart of the forest, upon the luckless Sandy!

The explanations, apologies, and not overwise conversation that ensued need not be indicated here. It would seem, however, that Miss Mary had already established some acquaintance with this ex-drunkard. Enough that he was soon accepted as one of the party; that the children, with that quick intelligence which Providence gives the helpless, recognised a friend, and played with his blonde beard and long silken mustache, and took other liberties,—as the helpless are apt to do. And when he had built a fire against a tree, and had shown them other mysteries of woodcraft, their admiration knew no bounds. At the close of two such foolish, idle, happy hours he found himself lying at the feet of the schoolmistress, gazing dreamily in her face as she sat upon the sloping hillside weaving wreaths of laurel and syringa, in very much the same attitude as he had lain when first they met. Nor was the similitude greatly forced. The weakness of an easy, sensuous nature, that had found a dreamy exaltation in liquor, it is to be feared was now finding an equal intoxication in love.

I think that Sandy was dimly conscious of this himself. I know that he longed to be doing something,—slaying a grizzly, scalping a savage, or sacrificing himself in some way for the sake of this sallow-faced, grey-eyed schoolmistress. As I should like to present him in a heroic attitude, I stay my hand with great difficulty at this moment, being only withheld from introducing such an episode by a strong conviction that it does not usually occur at such times. And I trust that my fairest reader, who remembers that, in a real crisis, it is always some uninteresting stranger or unromantic policeman, and not Adolphus, who rescues, will forgive the omission.

So they sat there undisturbed,—the woodpeckers chattering overhead and the voices of the children coming pleasantly from the hollow below. What they said matters little. What they thought—which might have been interesting—did not transpire. The woodpeckers only learned how Miss Mary was an orphan; how she left her uncle's house to come to California for the sake of health and independence; how Sandy was an orphan too; how he came to California for excitement; how he had lived a wild life, and how he was trying to reform; and other details, which, from a woodpecker's view-point, undoubtedly must have seemed stupid and a waste of time. But even in such trifles was the afternoon spent; and when the children were again gathered, and Sandy, with a delicacy which the schoolmistress well understood, took leave of them quietly at the outskirts of the settlement, it had seemed the shortest day of her weary life.

As the long, dry summer withered to its roots, the school term of Red Gulch—to use a local euphuism—“dried up” also. In another day Miss Mary would be free, and for a season, at least, Red Gulch would know her no more. She was seated alone in the schoolhouse, her cheek resting on

her hand, her eyes half closed in one of those day-dreams in which Miss Mary, I fear, to the danger of school discipline, was lately in the habit of indulging. Her lap was full of mosses, ferns, and other woodland memories. She was so preoccupied with these and her own thoughts that a gentle tapping at the door passed unheard, or translated itself into the remembrance of far-off woodpeckers. When at last it asserted itself more distinctly, she started up with a flushed cheek and opened the door. On the threshold stood a woman, the self-assertion and audacity of whose dress were in singular contrast to her timid, irresolute bearing.

Miss Mary recognised at a glance the dubious mother of her anonymous pupil. Perhaps she was disappointed, perhaps she was only fastidious; but as she coldly invited her to enter, she half-unconsciously settled her white cuffs and collar, and gathered closer her own chaste skirts. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the embarrassed stranger, after a moment's hesitation, left her gorgeous parasol open and sticking in the dust beside the door, and then sat down at the farther end of a long bench. Her voice was husky as she began—

“I heerd tell that you were goin’ down to the Bay to-morrow, and I couldn’t let you go until I came to thank you for your kindness to my Tommy.”

Tommy, Miss Mary said, was a good boy, and deserved more than the poor attention she could give him.

“Thank you, miss; thank ye!” cried the stranger, brightening even through the colour which Red Gulch knew facetiously as her “war paint,” and striving, in her embarrassment, to drag the long bench nearer the school-mistress. “I thank you, miss, for that; and if I am his mother, there ain’t a sweeter, dearer, better boy lives than him. And if I ain’t much as says it, thar ain’t a sweeter, dearer, angeler teacher lives than he’s got.”

Miss Mary, sitting primly behind her desk, with a ruler over her shoulder, opened her grey eyes widely at this, but said nothing.

"It ain't for you to be complimented by the like of me, I know," she went on hurriedly. "It ain't for me to be comin' here, in broad day, to do it, either; but I come to ask a favour,—not for me, miss,—not for me, but for the darling boy."

Encouraged by a look in the young schoolmistress's eye, and putting her lilac-gloved hands together, the fingers downward, between her knees, she went on, in a low voice—

"You see, miss, there's no one the boy has any claim on but me, and I ain't the proper person to bring him up. I thought some, last year, of sending him away to 'Frisco to school, but when they talked of bringing a schoolma'am here, I waited till I saw you, and then I knew it was all right, and I could keep my boy a little longer. And oh! miss, he loves you so much; and if you could hear him talk about you in his pretty way, and if he could ask you what I ask you now, you couldn't refuse him.

"It is natural," she went on, rapidly, in a voice that trembled strangely between pride and humility,— "it's natural that he should take to you, miss, for his father, when I first knew him, was a gentleman,—and the boy must forget me, sooner or later,—and so I ain't a goin' to cry about that. For I come to ask you to take my Tommy,—God bless him for the bestest, sweetest boy that lives,—to—to—take him with you."

She had risen and caught the young girl's hand in her own, and had fallen on her knees beside her.

"I've money plenty, and it's all yours and his. Put him in some good school, where you can go and see him, and help him to—to—to forget his mother. Do with him what

you like. The worst you can do will be kindness to what he will learn with me. Only take him out of this wicked life, this cruel place, this home of shame and sorrow. You will! I know you will,—won't you? You will,—you must not, you cannot say no! You will make him as pure, as gentle as yourself; and when he has grown up, you will tell him his father's name,—the name that hasn't passed my lips for years,—the name of Alexander Morton, whom they call here Sandy! Miss Mary!—do not take your hand away! Miss Mary, speak to me! You will take my boy? Do not put your face from me. I know it ought not to look on such as me. Miss Mary!—my God, be merciful!—she is leaving me!”

Miss Mary had risen, and, in the gathering twilight, had felt her way to the open window. She stood there, leaning against the casement, her eyes fixed on the last rosy tints that were fading from the western sky. There was still some of its light on her pure young forehead, on her white collar, on her clasped white hands, but all fading slowly away. The suppliant had dragged herself, still on her knees, beside her.

“I know it takes time to consider. I will wait here all night; but I cannot go until you speak. Do not deny me now. You will!—I see it in your sweet face,—such a face as I have seen in my dreams. I see it in your eyes, Miss Mary!—you will take my boy!”

The last red beam crept higher, suffused Miss Mary's eyes with something of its glory, flickered, and faded, and went out. The sun had set on Red Gulch. In the twilight and silence Miss Mary's voice sounded pleasantly.

“I will take the boy. Send him to me to-night.”

The happy mother raised the hem of Miss Mary's skirts to her lips. She would have buried her hot face in its virgin folds, but she dared not. She rose to her feet.

"Does—this man—know of your intention?" asked Miss Mary suddenly.

"No, nor cares. He has never even seen the child to know it."

"Go to him at once—to-night—now! Tell him what you have done. Tell him I have taken his child, and tell him—he must never see—see—the child again. Wherever it may be, he must not come; wherever I may take it, he must not follow! There, go now, please,—I'm weary, and—have much yet to do!"

They walked together to the door. On the threshold the woman turned.

"Good-night!"

She would have fallen at Miss Mary's feet. But at the same moment the young girl reached out her arms, caught the sinful woman to her own pure breast for one brief moment, and then closed and locked the door.

It was with a sudden sense of great responsibility that Profane Bill took the reins of the Slumgullion Stage the next morning, for the schoolmistress was one of his passengers. As he entered the highroad, in obedience to a pleasant voice from the "inside," he suddenly reined up his horses and respectfully waited, as "Tommy" hopped out at the command of Miss Mary.

"Not that bush, Tommy,—the next."

Tommy whipped out his new pocket-knife, and cutting a branch from a tall azalea bush, returned with it to Miss Mary.

"All right now?"

"All right!"

And the stage-door closed on the Idyl of Red Gulch.

## Brown of Calaveras.

A SUBDUED tone of conversation, and the absence of cigar-smoke and boot-heels at the windows of the Wingdam stage-coach, made it evident that one of the inside passengers was a woman. A disposition on the part of loungers at the stations to congregate before the window, and some concern in regard to the appearance of coats, hats, and collars, further indicated that she was lovely. All of which Mr. Jack Hamlin, on the box-seat, noted with the smile of cynical philosophy. Not that he depreciated the sex, but that he recognised therein a deceitful element, the pursuit of which sometimes drew mankind away from the equally uncertain blandishments of poker,—of which it may be remarked that Mr. Hamlin was a professional exponent.

So that, when he placed his narrow boot on the wheel and leaped down, he did not even glance at the window from which a green veil was fluttering, but lounged up and down with that listless and grave indifference of his class, which was, perhaps, the next thing to good-breeding. With his closely-buttoned figure and self-contained air he was a marked contrast to the other passengers, with their feverish restlessness and boisterous emotion; and even Bill Masters, a graduate of Harvard, with his slovenly dress, his overflowing vitality, his intense appreciation of lawlessness and barbarism, and his mouth filled with crackers and cheese,

I fear cut but an unromantic figure beside this lonely calculator of chances, with his pale Greek face and Homeric gravity.

The driver called "All aboard!" and Mr. Hamlin returned to the coach. His foot was upon the wheel, and his face raised to the level of the open window, when, at the same moment, what appeared to him to be the finest eyes in the world suddenly met his. He quietly dropped down again, addressed a few words to one of the inside passengers, effected an exchange of seats, and as quietly took his place inside. Mr. Hamlin never allowed his philosophy to interfere with decisive and prompt action.

I fear that this irruption of Jack cast some restraint upon the other passengers, particularly those who were making themselves most agreeable to the lady. One of them leaned forward, and apparently conveyed to her information regarding Mr. Hamlin's profession in a single epithet. Whether Mr. Hamlin heard it, or whether he recognised in the informant a distinguished jurist, from whom, but a few evenings before, he had won several thousand dollars, I cannot say. His colourless face betrayed no sign; his black eyes, quietly observant, glanced indifferently past the legal gentleman, and rested on the much more pleasing features of his neighbour. An Indian stoicism—said to be an inheritance from his maternal ancestor—stood him in good service, until the rolling wheels rattled upon the river gravel at Scott's Ferry, and the stage drew up at the International Hotel for dinner. The legal gentleman and a member of Congress leaped out, and stood ready to assist the descending goddess, while Colonel Starbottle of Siskiyou took charge of her parasol and shawl. In this multiplicity of attention there was a momentary confusion and delay. Jack Hamlin quietly opened the *opposite* door of the coach, took the lady's hand, with

that decision and positiveness which a hesitating and undecided sex know how to admire, and in an instant had dexterously and gracefully swung her to the ground and again lifted her to the platform. An audible chuckle on the box, I fear, came from that other cynic, "Yuba Bill," the driver. "Look keerfully arter that baggage, Kernel," said the expressman, with affected concern, as he looked after Colonel Starbottle, gloomily bringing up the rear of the triumphant procession to the waiting-room.

Mr. Hamlin did not stay for dinner. His horse was already saddled and awaiting him. He dashed over the ford, up the gravelly hill, and out into the dusty perspective of the Wingdam road, like one leaving an unpleasant fancy behind him. The inmates of dusty cabins by the roadside shaded their eyes with their hands and looked after him, recognising the man by his horse, and speculating what "was up with Comanche Jack." Yet much of this interest centred in the horse, in a community where the time made by "French Pete's" mare, in his run from the Sheriff of Calaveras, eclipsed all concern in the ultimate fate of that worthy.

The sweating flanks of his grey at length recalled him to himself. He checked his speed, and turning into a by-road, sometimes used as a cut-off, trotted leisurely along, the reins hanging listlessly from his fingers. As he rode on, the character of the landscape changed and became more pastoral. Openings in groves of pine and sycamore disclosed some rude attempts at cultivation,—a flowering vine trailed over the porch of one cabin, and a woman rocked her cradled babe under the roses of another. A little farther on Mr. Hamlin came upon some barelegged children wading in the willowy creek, and so wrought upon them with a badinage peculiar to himself, that they were emboldened to climb up his horse's legs and over his saddle,

until he was fain to develop an exaggerated ferocity of demeanour, and to escape, leaving behind some kisses and coin. And then, advancing deeper into the woods, where all signs of habitation failed, he began to sing, uplifting a tenor so singularly sweet, and shaded by a pathos so subdued and tender, that I wot the robins and linnets stopped to listen. Mr. Hamlin's voice was not cultivated; the subject of his song was some sentimental lunacy, borrowed from the negro minstrels; but there thrilled through all some occult quality of tone and expression that was unspeakably touching. Indeed, it was a wonderful sight to see this sentimental blackleg, with a pack of cards in his pocket and a revolver at his back, sending his voice before him through the dim woods with a plaint about his "Nelly's grave," in a way that overflowed the eyes of the listener. A sparrow-hawk, fresh from his sixth victim, possibly recognising in Mr. Hamlin a kindred spirit, stared at him in surprise, and was fain to confess the superiority of man. With a superior predatory capacity, *he* couldn't sing.

But Mr. Hamlin presently found himself again on the highroad and at his former pace. Ditches and banks of gravel, denuded hillsides, stumps, and decayed trunks of trees, took the place of woodland and ravine, and indicated his approach to civilisation. Then a church-steeple came in sight, and he knew that he had reached home. In a few moments he was clattering down the single narrow street that lost itself in a chaotic ruin of races, ditches, and tailings at the foot of the hill, and dismounted before the gilded windows of the "Magnolia" saloon. Passing through the long bar-room, he pushed open a green-baize door, entered a dark passage, opened another door with a pass-key, and found himself in a dimly-lighted room, whose furniture, though elegant and costly for the locality, showed

signs of abuse. The inlaid centre-table was overlaid with stained disks that were not contemplated in the original design, the embroidered arm-chairs were discoloured, and the green velvet lounge, on which Mr. Hamlin threw himself, was soiled at the foot with the red soil of Wingdam.

Mr. Hamlin did not sing in his cage. He lay still, looking at a highly-coloured painting above him, representing a young creature of opulent charms. It occurred to him then, for the first time, that he had never seen exactly that kind of a woman, and that, if he should, he would not, probably, fall in love with her. Perhaps he was thinking of another style of beauty. But just then some one knocked at the door. Without rising, he pulled a cord that apparently shot back a bolt, for the door swung open and a man entered.

The newcomer was broad-shouldered and robust,—a vigour not borne out in the face, which, though handsome, was singularly weak and disfigured by dissipation. He appeared to be also under the influence of liquor, for he started on seeing Mr. Hamlin, and said, "I thought Kate was here;" stammered, and seemed confused and embarrassed.

Mr. Hamlin smiled the smile which he had before worn on the Wingdam coach, and sat up, quite refreshed and ready for business.

"You didn't come up on the stage," continued the newcomer, "did you?"

"No," replied Hamlin; "I left it at Scott's Ferry. It isn't due for half an hour yet. But how's luck, Brown?"

"D——d bad," said Brown, his face suddenly assuming an expression of weak despair. "I'm cleaned out again, Jack," he continued, in a whining tone, that formed a pitiable contrast to his bulky figure; "can't you help me

with a hundred till to-morrow's clean-up? You see I've got to send money home to the old woman, and—you've won twenty times that amount from me."

The conclusion was, perhaps, not entirely logical, but Jack overlooked it, and handed the sum to his visitor. "The old woman business is about played out, Brown," he added, by way of commentary; "why don't you say you want to buck agin' faro? You know you ain't married!"

"Fact, sir," said Brown, with a sudden gravity, as if the mere contact of the gold with the palm of the hand had imparted some dignity to his frame. "I've got a wife—a d——d good one, too, if I do say it—in the States. It's three year since I've seen her, and a year since I've writ to her. When things is about straight, and we get down to the lead, I'm going to send for her."

"And Kate?" queried Mr. Hamlin, with his previous smile.

Mr. Brown of Calaveras essayed an archness of glance to cover his confusion, which his weak face and whisky-muddled intellect but poorly carried out, and said—

"D——n it, Jack, a man must have a little liberty, you know. But come, what do you say to a little game? Give us a show to double this hundred."

Jack Hamlin looked curiously at his fatuous friend. Perhaps he knew that the man was predestined to lose the money, and preferred that it should flow back into his own coffers rather than any other. He nodded his head and drew his chair toward the table. At the same moment there came a rap upon the door.

"It's Kate," said Mr. Brown.

Mr. Hamlin shot back the bolt and the door opened. But, for the first time in his life, he staggered to his feet utterly unnerved and abashed, and for the first time in his life the hot blood crimsoned his colourless cheeks to his

forehead. For before him stood the lady he had lifted from the Wingdam coach, whom Brown, dropping his cards with a hysterical laugh, greeted as—

“My old woman, by thunder!”

They say that Mrs. Brown burst into tears and reproaches of her husband. I saw her in 1857 at Marysville, and disbelieve the story. And the *Wingdam Chronicle* of the next week, under the head of “Touching Reunion,” said: “One of those beautiful and touching incidents, peculiar to California life, occurred last week in our city. The wife of one of Wingdam’s eminent pioneers, tired of the effete civilisation of the East and its inhospitable climate, resolved to join her noble husband upon these golden shores. Without informing him of her intention, she undertook the long journey, and arrived last week. The joy of the husband may be easier imagined than described. The meeting is said to have been indescribably affecting. We trust her example may be followed.”

Whether owing to Mrs. Brown’s influence, or to some more successful speculations, Mr. Brown’s financial fortune from that day steadily improved. He bought out his partners in the “Nip and Tuck” lead, with money which was said to have been won at poker a week or two after his wife’s arrival, but which rumour, adopting Mrs. Brown’s theory that Brown had forsworn the gaming-table, declared to have been furnished by Mr. Jack Hamlin. He built and furnished the “Wingdam House,” which pretty Mrs. Brown’s great popularity kept overflowing with guests. He was elected to the Assembly, and gave largess to churches. A street in Wingdam was named in his honour.

Yet it was noted that in proportion as he waxed wealthy and fortunate, he grew pale, thin, and anxious. As his wife’s popularity increased, he became fretful and impatient.

The most uxorious of husbands, he was absurdly jealous. If he did not interfere with his wife's social liberty, it was because it was maliciously whispered that his first and only attempt was met by an outburst from Mrs. Brown that terrified him into silence. Much of this kind of gossip came from those of her own sex whom she had supplanted in the chivalrous attentions of Wingdam, which, like most popular chivalry, was devoted to an admiration of power, whether of masculine force or feminine beauty. It should be remembered, too, in her extenuation, that, since her arrival, she had been the unconscious priestess of a mythological worship, perhaps not more ennobling to her womanhood than that which distinguished an older Greek democracy. I think that Brown was dimly conscious of this. But his only confidant was Jack Hamlin, whose *infelix* reputation naturally precluded any open intimacy with the family, and whose visits were infrequent.

It was midsummer and a moonlit night, and Mrs. Brown, very rosy, large-eyed, and pretty, sat upon the piazza, enjoying the fresh incense of the mountain breeze, and, it is to be feared, another incense which was not so fresh nor quite as innocent. Beside her sat Colonel Starbottle and Judge Boompinter, and a later addition to her court in the shape of a foreign tourist. She was in good spirits.

"What do you see down the road?" inquired the gallant Colonel, who had been conscious, for the last few minutes, that Mrs. Brown's attention was diverted.

"Dust," said Mrs. Brown, with a sigh. "Only Sister Anne's 'flock of sheep.'"

The Colonel, whose literary recollections did not extend farther back than last week's paper, took a more practical view. "It ain't sheep," he continued; "it's a horseman. Judge, ain't that Jack Hamlin's grey?"

But the Judge didn't know; and, as Mrs. Brown sug-

gested the air was growing too cold for further investigations, they retired to the parlour.

Mr. Brown was in the stable, where he generally retired after dinner. Perhaps it was to show his contempt for his wife's companions; perhaps, like other weak natures, he found pleasure in the exercise of absolute power over inferior animals. He had a certain gratification in the training of a chestnut mare, whom he could beat or caress as pleased him, which he couldn't do with Mrs. Brown. It was here that he recognised a certain grey horse which had just come in, and, looking a little farther on, found his rider. Brown's greeting was cordial and hearty; Mr. Hamlin's somewhat restrained. But, at Brown's urgent request, he followed him up the back-stairs to a narrow corridor, and thence to a small room looking out upon the stable-yard. It was plainly furnished with a bed, a table, a few chairs, and a rack for guns and whips.

"This yer's my home, Jack," said Brown with a sigh, as he threw himself upon the bed and motioned his companion to a chair. "Her room's t' other end of the hall. It's more'n six months since we've lived together, or met, except at meals. It's mighty rough papers on the head of the house, ain't it?" he said with a forced laugh. "But I'm glad to see you, Jack, d——d glad," and he reached from the bed, and again shook the unresponsive hand of Jack Hamlin.

"I brought ye up here, for I didn't want to talk in the stable; though, for the matter of that, it's all round town. Don't strike a light. We can talk here in the moonshine. Put up your feet on that winder and sit here beside me. Thar's whisky in that jug."

Mr. Hamlin did not avail himself of the information. Brown of Calaveras turned his face to the wall and continued—

"If I didn't love the woman, Jack, I wouldn't mind. But it's loving her, and seeing her day arter day goin' on at this rate, and no one to put down the brake; that's what gits me! But I'm glad to see ye, Jack, d——d glad."

In the darkness he groped about until he had found and wrung his companion's hand again. He would have detained it, but Jack slipped it into the buttoned breast of his coat, and asked, listlessly, "How long has this been going on?"

"Ever since she came here; ever since the day she walked into the 'Magnolia.' I was a fool then; Jack, I'm a fool now; but I didn't know how much I loved her till then. And she hasn't been the same woman since.

"But that ain't all, Jack; and it's what I wanted to see you about, and I'm glad you've come. It ain't that she doesn't love me any more; it ain't that she fools with every chap that comes along; for perhaps I staked her love and lost it, as I did everything else at the 'Magnolia;' and perhaps foolin' is nateral to some women, and thar ain't no great harm done, 'cept to the fools. But, Jack, I think,—I think she loves somebody else. Don't move, Jack! don't move; if your pistol hurts ye, take it off.

"It's been more'n six months now that she's seemed unhappy and lonesome, and kinder nervous and scared like. And sometimes I've ketched her lookin' at me sort of timid and pitying. And she writes to somebody. And for the last week she's been gathering her own things,—trinkets, and furbelows, and jew'lry,—and, Jack, I think she's goin' off. I could stand all but that. To have her steal away like a thief!" He put his face downward to the pillow, and for a few moments there was no sound but the ticking of a clock on the mantel. Mr. Hamlin lit a cigar, and moved to the open window. The moon no longer shone into the room, and the bed and its occupant were in shadow. "What shall I do, Jack?" said the voice from the darkness.

The answer came promptly and clearly from the window-side,—“Spot the man, and kill him on sight.”

“But, Jack”——

“He’s took the risk!”

“But will that bring *her* back?”

Jack did not reply, but moved from the window towards the door.

“Don’t go yet, Jack; light the candle and sit by the table. It’s a comfort to see ye, if nothin’ else.”

Jack hesitated and then complied. He drew a pack of cards from his pocket and shuffled them, glancing at the bed. But Brown’s face was turned to the wall. When Mr. Hamlin had shuffled the cards, he cut them, and dealt one card on the opposite side of the table towards the bed, and another on his side of the table for himself. The first was a deuce; his own card a king. He then shuffled and cut again. This time “dummy” had a queen and himself a four-spot. Jack brightened up for the third deal. It brought his adversary a deuce and himself a king again. “Two out of three,” said Jack, audibly.

“What’s that, Jack?” said Brown.

“Nothing.”

Then Jack tried his hand with dice; but he always threw sixes and his imaginary opponent aces. The force of habit is sometimes confusing.

Meanwhile some magnetic influence in Mr. Hamlin’s presence, or the anodyne of liquor, or both, brought surcease of sorrow, and Brown slept. Mr. Hamlin moved his chair to the window and looked out on the town of Wingdam, now sleeping peacefully, its harsh outlines softened and subdued, its glaring colours mellowed and sobered in the moonlight that flowed over all. In the hush he could hear the gurgling of water in the ditches and the sighing of the pines beyond the hill. Then he looked up at the

firmament, and as he did so a star shot across the twinkling field. Presently another, and then another. The phenomenon suggested to Mr. Hamlin a fresh augury. If in another fifteen minutes another star should fall—— He sat there, watch in hand, for twice that time, but the phenomenon was not repeated.

The clock struck two and Brown still slept. Mr. Hamlin approached the table and took from his pocket a letter, which he read by the flickering candlelight. It contained only a single line, written in pencil, in a woman's hand,—

“Be at the corral with the buggy at three.”

The sleeper moved uneasily and then awoke. “Are you there, Jack?”

“Yes.”

“Don't go yet. I dreamed just now, Jack,—dreamed of old times. I thought that Sue and me was being married agin, and that the parson, Jack, was—who do you think?—you!”

The gambler laughed, and seated himself on the bed, the paper still in his hand.

“It's a good sign, ain't it?” queried Brown.

“I reckon! Say, old man, hadn't you better get up?”

The “old man,” thus affectionately appealed to, rose, with the assistance of Hamlin's outstretched hand.

“Smoke?”

Brown mechanically took the proffered cigar.

“Light?”

Jack had twisted the letter into a spiral, lit it, and held it for his companion. He continued to hold it until it was consumed, and dropped the fragment—a fiery star—from the open window. He watched it as it fell, and then returned to his friend.

“Old man,” he said, placing his hands upon Brown's shoulders, “in ten minutes I'll be on the road, and gone

like that spark. We won't see each other agin ; but, before I go, take a fool's advice : sell out all you've got, take your wife with you, and quit the country. It ain't no place for you nor her. Tell her she must go ; make her go if she won't. Don't whine because you can't be a saint and she ain't an angel. Be a man, and treat her like a woman. Don't be a d——d fool. Good-bye."

He tore himself from Brown's grasp and leaped down the stairs like a deer. At the stable-door he collared the half-sleeping hostler, and backed him against the wall. "Saddle my horse in two minutes, or I'll"—— The ellipsis was frightfully suggestive.

"The missis said you was to have the buggy," stammered the man.

"D——n the buggy!"

The horse was saddled as fast as the nervous hands of the astounded hostler could manipulate buckle and strap.

"Is anything up, Mr. Hamlin?" said the man, who, like all his class, admired the *élan* of his fiery patron, and was really concerned in his welfare.

"Stand aside!"

The man fell back. With an oath, a bound, and clatter, Jack was into the road. In another moment, to the man's half-awakened eyes, he was but a moving cloud of dust in the distance, towards which a star just loosed from its brethren was trailing a stream of fire.

But early that morning the dwellers by the Wingdam turnpike, miles away, heard a voice, pure as a skylark's, singing afield. They who were asleep turned over on their rude couches to dream of youth and love and olden days. Hard-faced men and anxious gold-seekers, already at work, ceased their labours and leaned upon their picks to listen to a romantic vagabond ambling away against the rosy sunrise.



*BOHEMIAN PAPERS.*



## Melons.

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognising some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy he was fond of indulging in melons, seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices, as "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical

language. My window—a rear room on the ground floor—in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least predisposed to somnambulism, it would have broken out under such favourable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy—if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court, that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium—of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion—straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently

belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons, that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his everyday suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it has been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the out-houses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youths of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk, which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness, one day Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motives that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbours. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards.

It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammelled by the conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window, I saw Melons perched on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in mid-air. In vain the female relatives of Tommy congregated in the back-yard expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions, and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succour him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though of course Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons, to all practical purposes, lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the literature of the Pacific Coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific Coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after

coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alteration, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method, which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. In this spiritual commingling the time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window), until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

A seafaring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odours of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room there was a lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small

boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact co-relation between this circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room—and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one who knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of the gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was—I blush to say it—Melons. Melons the depredator—Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons—now a fugitive on some neighbouring house-top. I lit a cigar, and drawing my chair to the window, sought surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite!

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime impelled him toward my window. I smoked calmly and gazed at him without speaking. He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John

Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between his teeth. At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary.

"They is a cirkis," said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings—"a cirkis over yonder!"—indicating the locality with his foot—"with hosses, and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct—six hosses to onct—and nary saddle"—and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means—conversation with Melons was always a desperate means—must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully.

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots. Saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. *You* took those bananas. The offence under the statutes of California

is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after, is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium, Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas! he may not know, except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea, to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the Police Office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.

## A Venerable Impostor.

As I glance across my table, I am somewhat distracted by the spectacle of a venerable head whose crown occasionally appears beyond, at about its level. The apparition of a very small hand, whose fingers are bunchy and have the appearance of being slightly webbed, which is frequently lifted above the table in a vain and impotent attempt to reach the inkstand, always affects me as a novelty at each recurrence of the phenomenon. Yet both the venerable head and bunchy fingers belong to an individual with whom I am familiar, and to whom, for certain reasons hereafter described, I choose to apply the epithet written above this article.

His advent in the family was attended with peculiar circumstances. He was received with some concern, the number of retainers having been increased by one in honour of his arrival. He appeared to be weary,—his pretence was that he had come from a long journey,—so that for days, weeks, and even months, he did not leave his bed except when he was carried. But it was remarkable that his appetite was invariably regular and healthy, and that his meals, which he required should be brought to him, were seldom rejected. During this time he had little conversation with the family, his knowledge of our vernacular being limited, but occasionally spoke to himself in his own language,—a foreign tongue. The difficulties attend-

ing this eccentricity were obviated by the young woman who had from the first taken him under her protection,—being, like the rest of her sex, peculiarly open to impositions,—and who at once disorganised her own tongue to suit his. This was affected by the contraction of the syllables of some words, the addition of syllables to others, and an ingenious disregard for tenses and the governing powers of the verb. The same singular law which impels people in conversation with foreigners to imitate their broken English governed the family in their communications with him. He received these evidences of his power with an indifference not wholly free from scorn. The expression of his eye would occasionally denote that his higher nature revolted from them. I have no doubt myself that his wants were frequently misinterpreted; that the stretching forth of his hands toward the moon and stars might have been the performance of some religious rite peculiar to his own country, which was in ours misconstrued into a desire for physical nourishment. His repetition of the word “goo-goo,”—which was subject to a variety of opposite interpretations,—when taken in conjunction with his size, in my mind seemed to indicate his aboriginal or Aztec origin.

I incline to this belief as it sustains the impression I have already hinted at, that his extreme youth is a simulation and deceit; that he is really older and has lived before at some remote period, and that his conduct fully justifies his title as *A Venerable Impostor*. A variety of circumstances corroborate this impression: his tottering walk, which is a senile as well as a juvenile condition; his venerable head, thatched with such imperceptible hair that, at a distance, it looks like a mild aureola, and his imperfect dental exhibition. But beside these physical peculiarities may be observed certain moral symptoms, which go to

disprove his assumed youth. He is in the habit of falling into reveries, caused, I have no doubt, by some circumstance which suggests a comparison with his experience in his remoter boyhood, or by some serious retrospection of the past years. He has been detected lying awake at times when he should have been asleep, engaged in curiously comparing the bed-clothes, walls, and furniture with some recollection of his youth. At such moments he has been heard to sing softly to himself fragments of some unintelligible composition, which probably still linger in his memory as the echoes of a music he has long outgrown. He has the habit of receiving strangers with the familiarity of one who had met them before, and to whom their antecedents and peculiarities were matters of old acquaintance; and so unerring is his judgment of their previous character, that when he withholds his confidence I am apt to withhold mine. It is somewhat remarkable that while the maturity of his years and the respect due to them is denied by man, his superiority and venerable age is never questioned by the brute creation. The dog treats him with a respect and consideration accorded to none others, and the cat permits a familiarity which I should shudder to attempt. It may be considered an evidence of some Pantheistic quality in his previous education that he seems to recognise a fellowship even in inarticulate objects; he has been known to verbally address plants, flowers, and fruit, and to extend his confidence to such inanimate objects as chairs and tables. There can be little doubt that, in the remote period of his youth, these objects were endowed with not only sentient natures, but moral capabilities, and he is still in the habit of beating them when they collide with him, and of pardoning them with a kiss.

As he has grown older—rather let me say, as we have approximated to his years—he has, in spite of the apparent

paradox, lost much of his senile gravity. It must be confessed that some of his actions of late appear to our imperfect comprehension inconsistent with his extreme age. A habit of marching up and down with a string tied to a soda-water bottle, a disposition to ride anything that could by any exercise of the liveliest fancy be made to assume equine proportions, a propensity to blacken his venerable white hair with ink and coal dust, and an omnivorous appetite, which did not stop at chalk, clay, or cinders, were peculiarities not calculated to excite respect. In fact, he would seem to have become demoralised, and when, after a prolonged absence the other day, he was finally discovered standing upon the front steps addressing a group of delighted children out of his limited vocabulary, the circumstance could only be accounted for as the garrulity of age.

But I lay aside my pen amidst an ominous silence and the disappearance of the venerable head from my plane of vision. As I step to the other side of the table, I find that sleep has overtaken him in an overt act of hoary wickedness. The very pages I have devoted to an exposition of his deceit he has quietly abstracted, and I find them covered with cabalistic figures and wild-looking hieroglyphs traced with his forefinger dipped in ink, which doubtless in his own language conveys a scathing commentary on my composition. But he sleeps peacefully, and there is something in his face which tells me that he has already wandered away to that dim region of his youth where I cannot follow him. And as there comes a strange stirring at my heart when I contemplate the immeasurable gulf which lies between us, and how slight and feeble as yet is his grasp on this world and its strange realities, I find, too late, that I also am a willing victim of the Venerable Impostor.

## A Boys' Dog.

As I lift my eyes from the paper, I observe a dog lying on the steps of the opposite house. His attitude might induce passers-by and casual observers to believe him to belong to the people who live there, and to accord to him a certain standing and position. I have seen visitors pat him, under the impression that they were doing an act of courtesy to his master, he lending himself to the fraud by hypocritical contortions of the body. But his attitude is one of deceit and simulation. He has neither master nor habitation. He is a very Pariah and outcast ; in brief, "A Boys' Dog."

There is a degree of hopeless and irreclaimable vagabondage expressed in this epithet, which may not be generally understood. Only those who are familiar with the roving nature and predatory instincts of boys in large cities will appreciate its strength. It is the lowest step in the social scale to which a respectable canine can descend. A blind man's dog, or the companion of a knife-grinder, is comparatively elevated. He at least owes allegiance to but one master. But the Boys' Dog is the thrall of an entire juvenile community, obedient to the beck and call of the smallest imp in the neighbourhood, attached to and serving not the individual boy so much as the boy element and principle. In their active sports, in small thefts, raids into back-yards, window-breaking, and other minor juvenile recreations, he is a full participant. In this way he is the

reflection of the wickedness of many masters, without possessing the virtues or peculiarities of any particular one.

If leading a "dog's life" be considered a peculiar phase of human misery, the life of a Boys' Dog is still more infelicitous. He is associated in all schemes of wrong-doing, and unless he be a dog of experience, is always the scape-goat. He never shares the booty of his associates. In absence of legitimate amusement, he is considered fair game for his companions; and I have seen him reduced to the ignominy of having a tin kettle tied to his tail. His ears and tail have generally been docked to suit the caprice of the unholy band of which he is a member; and if he has any pluck, he is invariably pitted against larger dogs in mortal combat. He is poorly fed and hourly abused; the reputation of his associates debars him from outside sympathies; and once a Boys' Dog, he cannot change his condition. He is not unfrequently sold into slavery by his inhuman companions. I remember once to have been accosted on my own doorsteps by a couple of precocious youths, who offered to sell me a dog which they were then leading by a rope. The price was extremely moderate, being, if I remember rightly, but fifty cents. Imagining the unfortunate animal to have lately fallen into their wicked hands, and anxious to claim him from the degradation of becoming a Boys' Dog, I was about to conclude the bargain, when I saw a look of intelligence pass between the dog and his two masters. I promptly stopped all negotiation, and drove the youthful swindlers and their four-footed accomplice from my presence. The whole thing was perfectly plain. The dog was an old, experienced, and hardened Boys' Dog, and I was perfectly satisfied that he would run away and rejoin his old companions at the first opportunity. This I afterwards learned he did, on the occasion of a kind-hearted but unsophisti-

cated neighbour buying him ; and a few days ago I saw him exposed for sale by those two Arcadians in another neighbourhood, having been bought and paid for half a dozen times in this.

But, it will be asked, if the life of a Boys' Dog is so unhappy, why do they enter upon such an unenviable situation, and why do they not dissolve the partnership when it becomes unpleasant ? I will confess that I have been often puzzled by this question. For some time I could not make up my mind whether their unholy alliance was the result of the influence of the dog on the boy or *vice versa*, and which was the weakest and most impressible nature. I am satisfied now that at first the dog is undoubtedly influenced by the boy, and, as it were, is led, while yet a puppy, from the paths of canine rectitude by artful and designing boys. As he grows older and more experienced in the ways of his Bohemian friends, he becomes a willing decoy, and takes delight in leading boyish innocence astray, in beguiling children to play truant, and thus revenges his own degradation on the boy nature generally. It is in this relation, and in regard to certain unhallowed practices I have detected him in, that I deem it proper to expose to parents and guardians the danger to which their offspring is exposed by the Boys' Dog.

The Boys' Dog lays his plans artfully. He begins to influence the youthful mind by suggestions of unrestrained freedom and frolic which he offers in his own person. He will lie in wait at the garden gate for a very small boy, and endeavour to lure him outside its sacred precincts by gambolling and jumping a little beyond the enclosure. He will set off on an imaginary chase and run around the block in a perfectly frantic manner, and then return, breathless, to his former position, with a look as of one who would say, "There ! you see how perfectly easy it's done !" Should

the unhappy infant find it difficult to resist the effect which this glimpse of the area of freedom produces, and step beyond the gate, from that moment he is utterly demoralised. The Boys' Dog owns him body and soul. Straightway he is led by the deceitful brute into the unhallowed circle of his Bohemian masters. Sometimes the unfortunate boy, if he be very small, turns up eventually at the station-house as a lost child. Whenever I meet a stray boy in the street looking utterly bewildered and astonished, I generally find a Boys' Dog lurking on the corner. When I read the advertisements of lost children, I always add mentally to the description, "was last seen in company with a Boys' Dog." Nor is his influence wholly confined to small boys. I have seen him waiting patiently for larger boys on the way to school, and by artful and sophistical practices inducing them to play truant. I have seen him lying at the school-house door, with the intention of enticing the children on their way home to distant and remote localities. He has led many an unsuspecting boy to the wharves and quays by assuming the character of a water-dog, which he was not, and again has induced others to go with him on a gunning excursion by pretending to be a sporting dog, in which quality he was knowingly deficient. Unscrupulous, hypocritical, and deceitful, he has won many children's hearts by answering to any name they might call him, attaching himself to their persons until they got into trouble, and deserting them at the very moment they most needed his assistance. I have seen him rob small schoolboys of their dinners by pretending to knock them down by accident; and have seen larger boys in turn dispossess him of his ill-gotten booty for their own private gratification. From being a tool he has grown to be an accomplice; through much imposition, he has learned to impose on others; in his best character he is simply a vagabond's vagabond.

I could find it in my heart to pity him as he lies there through the long summer afternoon, enjoying brief intervals of tranquillity and rest, which he surreptitiously snatches from a stranger's door-step. For a shrill whistle is heard in the streets, the boys are coming home from school, and he is startled from his dreams by a deftly thrown potato, which hits him on the head, and awakens him to the stern reality that he is now and forever—a Boys' Dog.

## Surprising Adventures of Master Charles Summerton.

AT exactly half-past nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, August 26, 1865, Master Charles Summerton, aged five years, disappeared mysteriously from his paternal residence on Folsom Street, San Francisco. At twenty-five minutes past nine he had been observed by the butcher amusing himself by going through that popular youthful exercise known as "turning the crab," a feat in which he was singularly proficient. At a court of inquiry summarily held in the back-parlour at 10.15, Bridget, cook, deposed to have detected him at twenty minutes past nine in the felonious abstraction of sugar from the pantry, which, by the same token, had she known what was a-comin, she'd have never previnted. Patsey, a shrill-voiced youth from a neighbouring alley, testified to have seen "Chowley" at half-past nine in front of the butcher's shop round the corner; but as this young gentleman chose to throw out the gratuitous belief that the missing child had been converted into sausages by the butcher, his testimony was received with some caution by the female portion of the court, and with downright scorn and contumely by its masculine members. But whatever might have been the hour of his departure, it was certain that from half-past nine A.M. until nine P.M., when he was brought home by a policeman,

Charles Summerton was missing. Being naturally of a reticent disposition, he has since resisted, with but one exception, any attempt to wrest from him a statement of his whereabouts during that period. That exception has been myself. He has related to me the following in the strictest confidence.

His intention on leaving the door-steps of his dwelling was to proceed without delay to Van Diemen's Land, by way of Second and Market Streets. This project was subsequently modified so far as to permit a visit to Otaheite, where Captain Cook was killed. The outfit for his voyage consisted of two car-tickets, five cents in silver, a fishing-line, the brass capping of a spool of cotton, which in his eyes bore some resemblance to metallic currency, and a Sunday-school library ticket. His garments, admirably adapted to the exigencies of any climate, were severally a straw hat with a pink ribbon, a striped shirt, over which a pair of trousers, uncommonly wide in comparison to their length, were buttoned, striped balmoral stockings, which gave his youthful legs something of the appearance of wintergreen candy, and copper-toed shoes with iron heels, capable of striking fire from any flagstone. This latter quality, Master Charley could not help feeling, would be of infinite service to him in the wilds of Van Diemen's Land, which, as pictorially represented in his geography, seemed to be deficient in corner groceries and matches.

Exactly as the clock struck the half-hour, the short legs and straw hat of Master Charles Summerton disappeared around the corner. He ran rapidly, partly by way of inuring himself to the fatigues of the journey before him, and partly by way of testing his speed with that of a North Beach car which was proceeding in his direction. The conductor, not being aware of this generous and lofty emulation, and being somewhat concerned at the spectacle of a

pair of very short twinkling legs so far in the rear, stopped his car and generously assisted the youthful Summerton upon the platform. From this point a hiatus of several hours' duration occurs in Charles's narrative. He is under the impression that he "rode out" not only his two tickets, but that he became subsequently indebted to the Company for several trips to and from the opposite termini, and that at last, resolutely refusing to give any explanation of his conduct, he was finally ejected, much to his relief, on a street corner. Although, as he informs us, he felt perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, he was impelled under the circumstances to hurl after the conductor an opprobrious appellation which he had ascertained from Patsey was the correct thing in such emergencies, and possessed peculiarly exasperating properties.

We now approach a thrilling part of the narrative, before which most of the adventures of the "Boys' Own Book" pale into insignificance. There are times when the recollection of this adventure causes Master Charles to break out in a cold sweat, and he has several times since its occurrence been awakened by lamentations and outcries in the night season by merely dreaming of it. On the corner of the street lay several large empty sugar hogsheads. A few young gentlemen disported themselves therein, armed with sticks, with which they removed the sugar which still adhered to the joints of the staves, and conveyed it to their mouths. Finding a cask not yet pre-empted, Master Charles set to work, and for a few moments revelled in a wild saccharine dream, whence he was finally roused by an angry voice and the rapidly retreating footsteps of his comrades. An ominous sound smote his ear, and the next moment he felt the cask wherein he lay uplifted and set upright against the wall. He was a prisoner, but as yet undiscovered. Being satisfied in his mind that hanging

was the systematic and legalised penalty for the outrage he had committed, he kept down manfully the cry that rose to his lips.

In a few moments he felt the cask again lifted by a powerful hand, which appeared above him at the edge of his prison, and which he concluded belonged to the ferocious giant Blunderbore, whose features and limbs he had frequently met in coloured pictures. Before he could recover from his astonishment, his cask was placed with several others on a cart, and rapidly driven away. The ride which ensued he describes as being fearful in the extreme. Rolled around like a pill in a box, the agonies which he suffered may be hinted at, not spoken. Evidences of that protracted struggle were visible in his garments, which were of the consistency of syrup, and his hair, which for several hours, under the treatment of hot water, yielded a thin treacle. At length the cart stopped on one of the wharves, and the cartman began to unload. As he tilted over the cask in which Charles lay, an exclamation broke from his lips, and the edge of the cask fell from his hands, sliding its late occupant upon the wharf. To regain his short legs, and to put the greatest possible distance between himself and the cartman, were his first movements on regaining his liberty. He did not stop until he reached the corner of Front Street.

Another blank succeeds in this veracious history. He cannot remember how or when he found himself in front of the circus tent. He has an indistinct recollection of having passed through a long street of stores which were all closed, and which made him fear that it was Sunday, and that he had spent a miserable night in the sugar cask. But he remembers hearing the sound of music within the tent, and of creeping on his hands and knees, when no one was looking, until he passed under the canvas. His description of

the wonders contained within that circle ; of the terrific feats which were performed by a man on a pole, since practised by him in the back-yard ; of the horses, one of which was spotted and resembled an animal in his Noah's Ark, hitherto unrecognised and undefined ; of the female equestrians, whose dresses could only be equalled in magnificence by the frocks of his sister's doll ; of the painted clown, whose jokes excited a merriment somewhat tinged by an undefined fear, was an effort of language which this pen could but weakly transcribe, and which no quantity of exclamation points could sufficiently illustrate. He is not quite certain what followed. He remembers that almost immediately on leaving the circus it became dark, and that he fell asleep, waking up at intervals on the corners of the streets, on front steps, in somebody's arms, and finally in his own bed. He was not aware of experiencing any regret for his conduct ; he does not recall feeling at any time a disposition to go home ; he remembers distinctly that he felt hungry.

He has made this disclosure in confidence. He wishes it to be respected. He wants to know if you have five cents about you.

## The Mission Dolores.

THE Mission Dolores is destined to be "The Last Sigh" of the native Californian. When the last "Greaser" shall indolently give way to the bustling Yankee, I can imagine he will, like the Moorish king, ascend one of the Mission hills to take his last lingering look at the hilled city. For a long time he will cling tenaciously to Pacific Street. He will delve in the rocky fastnesses of Telegraph Hill until progress shall remove it. He will haunt Vallejo Street, and those back slums which so vividly typify the degradation of a people; but he will eventually make way for improvement. The Mission will be last to drop from his nerveless fingers.

As I stand here this pleasant afternoon, looking up at the old chapel,—its ragged senility contrasting with the smart spring sunshine, its two gouty pillars with the plaster dropping away like tattered bandages, its rayless windows, its crumbling entrances, the leper spots on its whitewashed wall eating through the dark adobe,—I give the poor old mendicant but a few years longer to sit by the highway and ask alms in the names of the blessed saints. Already the vicinity is haunted with the shadow of its dissolution. The shriek of the locomotive discords with the Angelus bell. An Episcopal church, of a green Gothic type, with massive buttresses of Oregon pine, even now mocks its hoary age with imitation and supplants it with a sham. Vain, alas! were those rural accessories, the nurseries and market-

gardens, that once gathered about its walls and resisted civic encroachment. They too are passing away. Even those queer little adobe buildings with tiled roofs like longitudinal slips of cinnamon, and walled enclosures sacredly guarding a few bullock horns and strips of hide. I look in vain for the half-reclaimed Mexican, whose respectability stopped at his waist, and whose red sash under his vest was the utter undoing of his black broadcloth. I miss, too, those black-haired women, with swaying unstable busts, whose dresses were always unseasonable in texture and pattern; whose wearing of a shawl was a terrible awakening from the poetic dream of the Spanish mantilla. Traces of another nationality are visible. The railroad "navvy" has built his shanty near the chapel and smokes his pipe in the Posada. Gutturals have taken the place of linguals and sibilants. I miss the half-chanted, half-drawled cadences that used to mingle with the cheery "All aboard" of the stage-driver, in those good old days when the stages ran hourly to the Mission, and a trip thither was an excursion. At the very gates of the temple, in the place of those "who sell doves for sacrifice," a vender of mechanical spiders has halted with his unhallowed wares. Even the old Padre—last type of the missionary, and descendant of the good Junipero—I cannot find to-day; in his stead a light-haired Celt is reading a lesson from a Vulgate that is wonderfully replete with double r's. Gentle priest, in thy R-isons, let the stranger and heretic be remembered.

I open a little gate and enter the Mission churchyard. There is no change here, though perhaps the graves lie closer together. A willow-tree growing beside the deep brown wall has burst into tufted plumes in the fulness of spring. The tall grass blades over each mound show a strange quickening of the soil below. It is pleasanter here than on the bleak mountain seaward, where distracting

winds continually bring the strife and turmoil of the ocean. The Mission hills lovingly embrace the little cemetery, whose decorative taste is less ostentatious. The foreign flavour is strong; here are never-failing garlands of *immortelles*, with their sepulchral spicery; here are little cheap medallions of pewter, with the adornment of three black tears, that would look like the three of clubs, but that the simple humility of the inscription counterbalances all sense of the ridiculous. Here are children's graves with guardian angels of great specific gravity; but here, too, are the little one's toys in a glass case beside them. Here is the average quantity of execrable original verses; but one stanza—over a sailor's grave—is striking, for it expresses a hope of salvation through the “Lord High Admiral Christ!” Over the foreign graves there is a notable lack of scriptural quotation, and an increase, if I may say it, of humanity and tenderness. I cannot help thinking that too many of my countrymen are influenced by a morbid desire to make a practical point of this occasion, and are too apt hastily to crowd a whole life of omission into the culminating act. But when I see the grey *immortelles* crowning a tombstone, I know I shall find the mysteries of the resurrection shown rather in symbols, and only the love taught in His new commandment left for the graphic touch. But “they manage these things better in France.”

During my purposeless ramble the sun has been steadily climbing the brown wall of the church, and the air seems to grow cold and raw. The bright green dies out of the grass and the rich bronze comes down from the wall. The willow-tree seems half inclined to doff its plumes, and wears the dejected air of a broken faith and violated trust. The spice of the *immortelles* mixes with the incense that steals through the open window. Within, the barbaric gilt and crimson look cold and cheap in this searching air; by this

light the church certainly is old and ugly. I cannot help wondering whether the old Fathers, if they ever revisit the scene of their former labours, in their larger comprehensions view with regret the impending change, or mourn over the day when the Mission Dolores shall appropriately come to grief?

## Boonder.

I NEVER knew how the subject of this memoir came to attach himself so closely to the affections of my family. He was not a prepossessing dog. He was not a dog of even average birth and breeding. His pedigree was involved in the deepest obscurity. He may have had brothers and sisters, but in the whole range of my canine acquaintance (a pretty extensive one), I never detected any of Boonder's peculiarities in any other of his species. His body was long, and his fore-legs and hind-legs were very wide apart, as though Nature originally intended to put an extra pair between them, but had unwisely allowed herself to be persuaded out of it. This peculiarity was annoying on cold nights, as it always prolonged the interval of keeping the door open for Boonder's ingress long enough to allow two or three dogs of a reasonable length to enter. Boonder's feet were decided; his toes turned out considerably, and in repose his favourite attitude was the first position of dancing. Add to a pair of bright eyes ears that seemed to belong to some other dog, and a symmetrically pointed nose that fitted all apertures like a pass-key, and you have Boonder as we knew him.

I am inclined to think that his popularity was mainly owing to his quiet impudence. His advent in the family was that of an old member who had been absent for a short

time, but had returned to familiar haunts and associations. In a Pythagorean point of view this might have been the case, but I cannot recall any deceased member of the family who was in life partial to bone-burying (though it might be *post mortem* a consistent amusement), and this was Boonder's great weakness. He was at first discovered coiled up on a rug in an upper chamber, and was the least disconcerted of the entire household. From that moment Boonder became one of its recognised members, and privileges, often denied the most intelligent and valuable of his species, were quietly taken by him and submitted to by us. Thus, if he were found coiled up in a clothes-basket, or any article of clothing assumed locomotion on its own account, we only said, "Oh, it's Boonder!" with a feeling of relief that it was nothing worse.

I have spoken of his fondness for bone-burying. It could not be called an economical faculty, for he invariably forgot the locality of his treasure, and covered the garden with purposeless holes; but although the violets and daisies were not improved by Boonder's gardening, no one ever thought of punishing him. He became a synonym for Fate; a Boonder to be grumbled at, to be accepted philosophically,—but never to be averted. But although he was not an intelligent dog, nor an ornamental dog, he possessed some gentlemanly instincts. When he performed his only feat,—begging upon his hind legs (and looking remarkably like a penguin),—ignorant strangers would offer him crackers or cake, which he didn't like, as a reward of merit. Boonder always made a great show of accepting the proffered dainties, and even made hypocritical contortions as if swallowing, but always deposited the morsel when he was unobserved in the first convenient receptacle,—usually the visitor's overshoes.

In matters that did not involve courtesy, Boonder was

sincere in his likes and dislikes. He was instinctively opposed to the railroad. When the track was laid through our street, Boonder maintained a defiant attitude toward every rail as it went down, and resisted the cars shortly after to the fullest extent of his lungs. I have a vivid recollection of seeing him, on the day of the trial trip, come down the street in front of the car, barking himself out of all shape, and thrown back several feet by the recoil of each bark. But Boonder was not the only one who has resisted innovations, or has lived to see the innovation prosper and even crush. But I am anticipating. Boonder had previously resisted the gas, but although he spent one whole day in angry altercation with the workmen,—leaving his bones unburied and bleaching in the sun,—somehow the gas went in. The Spring Valley water was likewise unsuccessfully opposed, and the grading of an adjoining lot was for a long time a personal matter between Boonder and the contractor.

These peculiarities seemed to evince some decided character and embody some idea. A prolonged debate in the family upon this topic resulted in an addition to his name,—we called him “Boonder the Conservative,” with a faint acknowledgment of his fateful power. But, although Boonder had his own way, his path was not entirely of roses. Thorns sometimes pricked his sensibilities. When certain minor chords were struck on the piano, Boonder was always painfully affected and howled a remonstrance. If he were removed for company’s sake to the back-yard, at the recurrence of the provocation he would go his whole length (which was something) to improvise a howl that should reach the performer. But we got accustomed to Boonder, and as we were fond of music, the playing went on.

One morning Boonder left the house in good spirits with his regular bone in his mouth, and apparently the usual intention of burying it. The next day he was picked up lifeless on the track,—run over apparently by the first car that went out of the depot.

## From a Balcony.

THE little stone balcony which, by a popular fallacy, is supposed to be a necessary appurtenance of my window, has long been to me a source of curious interest. The fact that the asperities of our summer weather will not permit me to use it but once or twice in six months does not alter my concern for this incongruous ornament. It affects me as I suppose the conscious possession of a linen coat or a pair of nankeen trousers might affect a sojourner here who has not entirely outgrown his memory of Eastern summer heat and its glorious compensations,—a luxurious providence against a possible but by no means probable contingency. I no longer wonder at the persistency with which San Franciscans adhere to this architectural superfluity in the face of climatical impossibilities. The balconies in which no one sits, the piazzas on which no one lounges, are timid advances made to a climate whose cliurlishness we are trying to temper by an ostentation of confidence. Ridiculous as this spectacle is at all seasons, it is never more so than in that bleak interval between sunset and dark, when the shrill scream of the factory whistle seems to have concentrated all the hard, unsympathetic quality of the climate into one vocal expression.

Add to this the appearance of one or two pedestrians, manifestly too late for their dinners, and tasting in the shrewish air a bitter premonition of the welcome that

awaits them at home, and you have one of those ordinary views from my balcony which makes the balcony itself ridiculous.

But as I lean over its balustrade to-night—a night rare in its kindness and beauty—and watch the fiery ashes of my cigar drop into the abysmal darkness below, I am inclined to take back the whole of that preceding paragraph, although it cost me some labour to elaborate its polite malevolence. I can even recognise some melody in the music which comes irregularly and fitfully from the balcony of the Museum on Market Street, although it may be broadly stated that, as a general thing, the music of all museums, menageries, and circuses becomes greatly demoralised,—possibly through associations with the beasts. So soft and courteous is this atmosphere that I have detected the flutter of one or two light dresses on the adjacent balconies and piazzas, and the front parlour windows of a certain aristocratic mansion in the vicinity, which have always maintained a studious reserve in regard to the interior, to-night are suddenly thrown into the attitude of familiar disclosure. A few young people are strolling up the street with a lounging step which is quite a relief to that usual brisk, business-like pace which the chilly nights impose upon even the most sentimental lovers. The genial influences of the air are not restricted to the opening of shutters and front doors; other and more gentle disclosures are made, no doubt, beneath this moonlight. The bonnet and hat which passed beneath my balcony a few moments ago were suspiciously close together. I argued from this that my friend the editor will probably receive any quantity of verses for his next issue, containing allusions to “Luna,” in which the original epithet of “silver” will be applied to this planet, and that a “boon” will be asked for the evident purpose of rhyming with “moon,” and for no other. Should neither of the

parties be equal to this expression, the pent-up feelings of the heart will probably find vent later in the evening over the piano, in "I Wandered by the Brookside," or "When the Moon on the Lake is Beaming." But it has been permitted me to hear the fulfilment of my prophecy even as it was uttered. From the window of number Twelve Hundred and Seven gushes upon the slumberous misty air the maddening ballad "Ever of Thee," while at Twelve Hundred and Eleven the "Star of the Evening" rises with a chorus. I am inclined to think that there is something in the utter vacuity of the refrain in this song which especially commends itself to the young. The simple statement, "Star of the Evening," is again and again repeated with an imbecile relish; while the adjective "beautiful" recurs with a steady persistency too exasperating to dwell upon here. At occasional intervals a bass voice enunciates "Star-r! Star-r!" as a solitary and independent effort. Sitting here in my balcony, I picture the possessor of that voice as a small, stout young man, standing a little apart from the other singers, with his hands behind him under his coat-tail, and a severe expression of countenance. He sometimes leans forward, with a futile attempt to read the music over somebody else's shoulder, but always resumes his old severity of attitude before singing his part. Meanwhile the celestial subjects of this choral adoration look down upon the scene with a tranquillity and patience which can only result from the security with which their immeasurable remoteness invests them. I would remark that the stars are not the only topics subject to this "damnable iteration." A certain popular song, which contains the statement, "I will not forget you, mother," apparently reposes all its popularity on the constant and dreary repetition of this unimportant information, which at least produces the desired result among the audience. If the best operatic choruses

are not above this weakness, the unfamiliar language in which they are sung offers less violation to common sense.

It may be parenthetically stated here that the songs alluded to above may be found in sheet music on the top of the piano of any young lady who has just come from boarding-school. "The Old Arm-Chair," or "Woodman, Spare that Tree," will be also found in easy juxtaposition. The latter songs are usually brought into service at the instance of an uncle or bachelor brother, whose request is generally prefaced by a remark depreciatory of the opera, and the gratuitous observation that "we are retrograding, sir,—retrograding," and that "there is no music like the old songs." He sometimes condescends to accompany "Marie" in a tremulous barytone, and is particularly forcible in those passages where the word "repeat" is written, for reasons stated above. When the song is over, to the success of which he feels he has materially contributed, he will inform you that "you may talk of your 'arias' and your 'romanzas,' but for music, sir,—music—" at which point he becomes incoherent and unintelligible. It is this gentleman who suggests "China" or "Brattle Street" as a suitable and cheerful exercise for the social circle. There are certain amatory songs, of an arch and coquettish character, familiar to these localities, which the young lady, being called upon to sing, declines with a bashful and tantalising hesitation. Prominent among these may be mentioned an erotic effusion entitled "I'm Talking in my Sleep," which, when sung by a young person vivaciously and with appropriate glances, can be made to drive languishing swains to the verge of madness. Ballads of this quality afford splendid opportunities for bold young men, who, by ejaculating "Oh!" and "Ah!" at the affecting passages, frequently gain a fascinating reputation for wildness and scepticism.

But the music which called up these parenthetical reflections has died away, and with it the slight animosities it inspired. The last song has been sung, the piano closed, the lights are withdrawn from the windows, and the white skirts flutter away from stoops and balconies. The silence is broken only by the rattle and rumble of carriages coming from theatre and opera. I fancy that this sound—which, seeming to be more distinct at this hour than at any other time, might be called one of the civic voices of the night—has certain urbane suggestions not unpleasant to those born and bred in large cities. The moon, round and full, gradually usurps the twinkling lights of the city, that one by one seem to fade away and be absorbed in her superior lustre. The distant Mission hills are outlined against the sky, but through one gap the outlying fog which has stealthily invested us seems to have effected a breach, and only waits the co-operation of the laggard sea-breezes to sweep down and take the beleaguered city by assault. An ineffable calm sinks over the landscape. In the magical moonlight the shot-tower loses its angular outline and practical relations, and becomes a minaret from whose balcony an invisible muezzin calls the Faithful to prayer. “Prayer is better than sleep.” But what is this? A shuffle of feet on the pavement, a low hum of voices, a twang of some diabolical instrument, a preliminary hem and cough. Heavens! it cannot be! Ah! yes it is—it is—serenaders!

Anathema Maranatha! May purgatorial pains seize ye, William Count of Poitou, Girard de Boreuil, Arnaud de Marviel, Bertrand de Born, mischievous progenitors of jongleurs, troubadours, provençals, minnesingers, minstrels, and singers of cansos and love-chants! Confusion overtake and confound your modern descendants, the “metre ballad-mongers,” who carry the shamelessness of the Middle Ages

into the nineteenth century, and awake a sleeping neighbourhood to the brazen knowledge of their loves and wanton fancies ! Destruction and demoralisation pursue these pitiable imitators of a barbarous age, when ladies' names and charms were shouted through the land, and modest maiden never lent presence to tilt or tourney without hearing a chronicle of her virtues go round the lists, shouted by wheezy heralds and taken up by roaring swashbucklers ! Perdition overpower such ostentatious wooers ! Marry ! shall I shoot the amorous feline who nightly iterates his love-songs on my roof, and yet withhold my trigger-finger from yonder pranksome gallant ? Go to ! here is an orange left of last week's repast. Decay hath overtaken it,—it possesseth neither savour nor cleanliness. Ha ! cleverly thrown ! A hit—a palpable hit ! Peradventure I have still a boot that hath done me service, and, barring a looseness of the heel, an ominous yawning at the side, 'tis in good case ! Na'theless, 'twill serve. So ! so ! What ! dispersed ? Nay, then I too will retire !

## John Chinaman.

THE expression of the Chinese face in the aggregate is neither cheerful nor happy. In an acquaintance of half a dozen years, I can only recall one or two exceptions to this rule. There is an abiding consciousness of degradation, a secret pain or self-humiliation visible in the lines of the mouth and eye. Whether it is only a modification of Turkish gravity, or whether it is the dread Valley of the Shadow of the Drug through which they are continually straying, I cannot say. They seldom smile, and their laughter is of such an extraordinary and sardonic nature—so purely a mechanical spasm, quite independent of any mirthful attribute—that to this day I am doubtful whether I ever saw a Chinaman laugh. A theatrical representation by natives, one might think, would have set my mind at ease on this point; but it did not. Indeed, a new difficulty presented itself,—the impossibility of determining whether the performance was a tragedy or farce. I thought I detected the low comedian in an active youth who turned two somersaults and knocked everybody down on entering the stage. But, unfortunately, even this classic resemblance to the legitimate farce of our civilisation was deceptive. Another brocaded actor, who represented the hero of the play, turned three somersaults, and not only upset my theory and his fellow-actors at the same time, but apparently ran a-muck behind the scenes for some time afterward. I looked

around at the glinting white teeth to observe the effect of these two palpable hits. They were received with equal acclamation, and apparently equal facial spasms. One or two beheadings which enlivened the play produced the same sardonic effect, and left upon my mind a painful anxiety to know what was the serious business of life in China. It was noticeable, however, that my unrestrained laughter had a discordant effect, and that triangular eyes sometimes turned ominously toward the "Fanqui devil;" but as I retired discreetly before the play was finished, there were no serious results. I have only given the above as an instance of the impossibility of deciding upon the outward and superficial expression of Chinese mirth. Of its inner and deeper existence I have some private doubts. An audience that will view with a serious aspect the hero, after a frightful and agonising death, get up and quietly walk off the stage, cannot be said to have remarkable perceptions of the ludicrous.

I have often been struck with the delicate pliability of the Chinese expression and taste, that might suggest a broader and deeper criticism than is becoming these pages. A Chinaman will adopt the American costume, and wear it with a taste of colour and detail that will surpass those "native and to the manner born." To look at a Chinese slipper, one might imagine it impossible to shape the original foot to anything less cumbrous and roomy, yet a neater-fitting boot than that belonging to the Americanised Chinaman is rarely seen on this side of the Continent. When the loose sack or paletot takes the place of his brocade blouse, it is worn with a refinement and grace that might bring a jealous pang to the exquisite of our more refined civilisation. Pantaloon fall easily and naturally over legs that have known unlimited freedom and bagginess, and even garrote collars meet correctly around sun-

tanned throats. The new expression seldom overflows in gaudy cravats. I will back my Americanised Chinaman against any neophyte of European birth in the choice of that article. While in our own State the Greaser resists one by one the garments of the Northern invader, and even wears the livery of his conqueror with a wild and buttonless freedom, the Chinaman, abused and degraded as he is, changes by correctly graded transition to the garments of Christian civilisation. There is but one article of European wear that he avoids. These Bohemian eyes have never yet been pained by the spectacle of a tall hat on the head of an intelligent Chinaman.

My acquaintance with John has been made up of weekly interviews, involving the adjustment of the washing accounts, so that I have not been able to study his character from a social view-point, or observe him in the privacy of the domestic circle. I have gathered enough to justify me in believing him to be generally honest, faithful, simple, and painstaking. Of his simplicity let me record an instance, where a sad and civil young Chinaman brought me certain shirts with most of the buttons missing, and others hanging on delusively by a single thread. In a moment of unguarded irony I informed him that unity would at least have been preserved if the buttons were removed altogether. He smiled sadly and went away. I thought I had hurt his feelings, until the next week, when he brought me my shirts with a look of intelligence, and the buttons carefully and totally erased. At another time, to guard against his general disposition to carry off anything as soiled clothes that he thought could hold water, I requested him to always wait until he saw me. Coming home late one evening, I found the household in great consternation over an immovable Celestial, who had remained seated on the front doorstep during the day, sad and submissive,

firm but also patient, and only betraying any animation or token of his mission when he saw me coming. This same Chinaman evinced some evidences of regard for a little girl in the family, who in her turn reposed such faith in his intellectual qualities as to present him with a preternaturally uninteresting Sunday-school book, her own property. This book John made a point of carrying ostentatiously with him in his weekly visits. It appeared usually on the top of the clean clothes, and was sometimes painfully clasped outside of the big bundle of soiled linen. Whether John believed he unconsciously imbibed some spiritual life through its pasteboard cover, as the Prince in the "Arabian Nights" imbibed the medicine through the handle of the mallet, or whether he wished to exhibit a due sense of gratitude, or whether he hadn't any pockets, I have never been able to ascertain. In his turn, he would sometimes cut marvellous imitation roses from carrots for his little friend. I am inclined to think that the few roses strewn in John's path were such scentless imitations. The thorns only were real. From the persecutions of the young and old of a certain class, his life was a torment. I don't know what was the exact philosophy that Confucius taught, but it is to be hoped that poor John in his persecution is still able to detect the conscious hate and fear with which inferiority always regards the possibility of even-handed justice, and which is the keynote to the vulgar clamour about servile and degraded races.

## On a vulgar Little Boy.

THE subject of this article is at present leaning against a tree directly opposite to my window. He wears his cap with the wrong side before, apparently for no other object than that which seems the most obvious,—of showing more than the average quantity of very dirty face. His clothes, which are worn with a certain buttonless ease and freedom, display in the different quality of their fruit-stains a pleasing indication of the progress of the seasons. The nose of this vulgar little boy turns up at the end. I have noticed this in several other vulgar little boys, although it is by no means improbable that youthful vulgarity may be present without this facial peculiarity. Indeed, I am inclined to the belief that it is rather the result of early inquisitiveness—of furtive pressures against window-panes, and of looking over fences, or of the habit of biting large apples hastily—than an indication of scorn or juvenile superciliousness. The vulgar little boy is more remarkable for his obtrusive familiarity. It is my experience of his predisposition to this quality which has induced me to write this article.

My acquaintance with him began in a moment of weakness. I have an unfortunate predilection to cultivate originality in people, even when accompanied by objection-

able character. But, as I lack the firmness and skilfulness which usually accompany this taste in others, and enable them to drop acquaintances when troublesome, I have surrounded myself with divers unprofitable friends, among whom I count the vulgar little boy. The manner in which he first attracted my attention was purely accidental. He was playing in the street, and the driver of a passing vehicle cut at him sportively with his whip. The vulgar little boy rose to his feet and hurled after his tormentor a single sentence of invective. I refrain from repeating it, for I feel that I could not do justice to it here. If I remember rightly, it conveyed, in a very few words, a reflection on the legitimacy of the driver's birth; it hinted a suspicion of his father's integrity, and impugned the fair fame of his mother; it suggested incompetency in his present position, personal uncleanness, and evinced a sceptical doubt of his future salvation. As his youthful lips closed over the last syllable, the eyes of the vulgar little boy met mine. Something in my look emboldened him to wink. I did not repel the action nor the complicity it implied. From that moment I fell into the power of the vulgar little boy, and he has never left me since.

He haunts me in the streets and byways. He accosts me, when in the company of friends, with repulsive freedom. He lingers about the gate of my dwelling to waylay me as I issue forth to business. Distance he overcomes by main strength of lungs, and he hails me from the next street. He met me at the theatre the other evening, and demanded my check with the air of a young footpad. I foolishly gave it to him, but re-entering some time after, and comfortably seating myself in the parquet, I was electrified by hearing my name called from the gallery with the addition of a playful adjective. It was the vulgar little boy. During

the performance he projected spirally-twisted playbills in my direction, and indulged in a running commentary on the supernumeraries as they entered.

To-day has evidently been a dull one with him. I observe he whistles the popular airs of the period with less shrillness and intensity. Providence, however, looks not unkindly on him, and delivers into his hands, as it were, two nice little boys who have at this moment innocently strayed into our street. They are pink-and-white children, and are dressed alike, and exhibit a certain air of neatness and refinement which is alone sufficient to awaken the antagonism of the vulgar little boy. A sigh of satisfaction breaks from his breast. What does he do? Any other boy would content himself with simply knocking the hats off their respective heads, and so vent his superfluous vitality in a single act, besides precipitating the flight of the enemy. But there are æsthetic considerations not to be overlooked; insult is to be added to the injury inflicted, and in the struggles of the victim some justification is to be sought for extreme measures. The two nice little boys perceive their danger and draw closer to each other. The vulgar little boy begins by irony. He affects to be overpowered by the magnificence of their costume. He addresses me (across the street and through the closed window), and requests information if there haply be a circus in the vicinity. He makes affectionate inquiries after the health of their parents. He expresses a fear of maternal anxiety in regard to their welfare. He offers to conduct them home. One nice little boy feebly retorts; but alas! his correct pronunciation, his grammatical exactitude, and his moderate epithets only provoke a scream of derision from the vulgar little boy, who now rapidly changes his tactics. Staggering under the weight of his vituperation, they fall easy victims to what he

would call his "dexter mawley." A wail of lamentation goes up from our street. But as the subject of this article seems to require a more vigorous handling than I had purposed to give it, I find it necessary to abandon my present dignified position, seize my hat, open the front door, and try a stronger method.

## From a Back Window.

I REMEMBER that long ago, as a sanguine and trustful child, I became possessed of a highly-coloured lithograph representing a fair Circassian sitting by a window. The price I paid for this work of art may have been extravagant, even in youth's fluctuating slate-pencil currency; but the secret joy I felt in its possession knew no pecuniary equivalent. It was not alone that Nature in Circassia lavished alike upon the cheek of beauty and the vegetable kingdom that most expensive of colours,—lake; nor was it that the rose which bloomed beside the fair Circassian's window had no visible stem, and was directly grafted upon a marble balcony; but it was because it embodied an idea. That idea was a hinting of my Fate. I felt that somewhere a young and fair Circassian was sitting by a window looking out for me. The idea of resisting such an array of charms and colour never occurred to me, and to my honour be it recorded, that during the feverish period of adolescence I never thought of averting my destiny. But as vacation and holiday came and went, and as my picture at first grew blurred, and then faded quite away between the Eastern and Western continents in my atlas, so its charm seemed mysteriously to pass away. When I became convinced that few females, of Circassian or other origin, sat pensively resting their chins on their henna-tinged nails at their parlour windows, I turned my attention to back windows. Although

the fair Circassian has not yet burst upon me with open shutters, some peculiarities not unworthy of note have fallen under my observation. This knowledge has not been gained without sacrifice. I have made myself familiar with back windows and their prospects in the weak disguise of seeking lodgings, heedless of the suspicious glances of landladies and their evident reluctance to show them. I have caught cold by long exposure to draughts. I have become estranged from friends by unconsciously walking to their back windows during a visit when the weekly linen hung upon the line, or when Miss Fanny (ostensibly indisposed) actually assisted in the laundry, and Master Bobby, in scant attire, disported himself on the area railings. But I have thought of Galileo, and the invariable experience of all seekers and discoverers of truth has sustained me.

Show me the back windows of a man's dwelling, and I will tell you his character. The rear of a house only is sincere. The attitude of deception kept up at the front windows leaves the back area defenceless. The world enters at the front door, but nature comes out at the back passage. That glossy, well-brushed individual, who lets himself in with a latch-key at the front door at night, is a very different being from the slipshod wretch who growls of mornings for hot water at the door of the kitchen. The same with Madame, whose contour of figure grows angular, whose face grows pallid, whose hair comes down, and who looks some ten years older through the sincere medium of a back window. No wonder that intimate friends fail to recognise each other in this *dos à dos* position. You may imagine yourself familiar with the silver door-plate and bow-windows of the mansion where dwells your Saccharissa; you may even fancy you recognise her graceful figure between the lace curtains of the upper chamber which you fondly imagine to be hers; but you shall dwell for months in the

rear of her dwelling and within whispering distance of her bower, and never know it. You shall see her with a handkerchief tied round her head in confidential discussion with the butcher, and know her not. You shall hear her voice in shrill expostulation with her younger brother, and it shall awaken no familiar response.

I am writing at a back window. As I prefer the warmth of my coal-fire to the foggy freshness of the afternoon breeze that rattles the leafless shrubs in the garden below me, I have my window-sash closed ; consequently, I miss much of the shrilly altercation that has been going on in the kitchen of No. 7 just opposite. I have heard fragments of an entertaining style of dialogue usually known as "chaffing," which has just taken place between Biddy in No. 9 and the butcher who brings the dinner. I have been pitying the chilled aspect of the poor canary, put out to taste the fresh air from the window of No. 5. I have been watching—and envying, I fear—the real enjoyment of two children raking over an old dust-heap in the alley containing the waste and *débris* of all the back yards in the neighbourhood. What a wealth of soda-water bottles and old iron they have acquired ! But I am waiting for an even more familiar prospect from my back window. I know that later in the afternoon, when the evening paper comes, a thickset, grey-haired man will appear in his shirt-sleeves at the back door of No. 9, and, seating himself on the door-step, begin to read. He lives in a pretentious house, and I hear he is a rich man. But there is such humility in his attitude, and such evidence of gratitude at being allowed to sit outside of his own house and read his paper in his shirt-sleeves, that I can picture his domestic history pretty clearly. Perhaps he is following some old habit of humbler days. Perhaps he has entered into an agreement with his wife not to indulge his disgraceful habit indoors. He does not look like a

man who could be coaxed into a dressing-gown. In front of his own palatial residence, I know him to be a quiet and respectable middle-aged business-man, but it is from my back window that my heart warms toward him in his shirt-sleeved simplicity. So I sit and watch him in the twilight as he reads gravely, and wonder sometimes, when he looks up, squares his chest, and folds his paper thoughtfully over his knee, whether he doesn't fancy he hears the letting down of bars or the tinkling of bells as the cows come home and stand lowing for him at the gate.

## Sidewalkings.

THE time occupied in walking to and from my business I have always found to yield me a certain mental enjoyment which no other part of the twenty-four hours could give. Perhaps the physical exercise may have acted as a gentle stimulant of the brain, but more probably the comfortable consciousness that I could not reasonably be expected to be doing anything else—to be studying or improving my mind, for instance—always gave a joyous liberty to my fancy. I once thought it necessary to employ this interval in doing sums in arithmetic,—in which useful study I was and am still lamentably deficient,—but after one or two attempts at peripatetic computation, I gave it up. I am satisfied that much enjoyment is lost to the world by this nervous anxiety to improve our leisure moments, which, like the “shining hours” of Dr. Watts, unfortunately offer the greatest facilities for idle pleasure. I feel a profound pity for those misguided beings who are still impelled to carry text-books with them in cars, omnibuses, and ferryboats, and who generally manage to defraud themselves of those intervals of rest they most require. Nature must have her fallow moments, when she covers her exhausted fields with flowers instead of grain. Deny her this, and the next crop suffers for it. I offer this axiom as some apology for obtruding upon the reader a few of the speculations which have engaged my mind during these daily perambulations.

Few Californians know how to lounge gracefully. Business habits, and a deference to the custom, even with those who have no business, give an air of restless anxiety to every pedestrian. The exceptions to this rule are apt to go to the other extreme, and wear a defiant, obtrusive kind of indolence which suggests quite as much inward disquiet and unrest. The shiftless lassitude of a gambler can never be mistaken for the lounge of a gentleman. Even the brokers who loiter upon Montgomery Street at high noon are not loungers. Look at them closely and you will see a feverishness and anxiety under the mask of listlessness. They do not lounge—they lie in wait. No surer sign, I imagine, of our peculiar civilisation can be found than this lack of repose in its constituent elements. You cannot keep Californians quiet even in their amusements. They dodge in and out of the theatre, opera, and lecture-room; they prefer the street cars to walking because they think they get along faster. The difference of locomotion between Broadway, New York, and Montgomery Street, San Francisco, is a comparative view of Eastern and Western civilisation.

There is a habit peculiar to many walkers, which "Punch," some years ago, touched upon satirically, but which seems to have survived the jester's ridicule. It is that custom of stopping friends in the street, to whom we have nothing whatever to communicate, but whom we embarrass for no other purpose than simply to show our friendship. Jones meets his friend Smith, whom he has met in nearly the same locality but a few hours before. During that interval, it is highly probable that no event of any importance to Smith, nor indeed to Jones, which by a friendly construction Jones could imagine Smith to be interested in, has occurred, or is likely to occur. Yet both gentlemen stop and shake hands earnestly. "Well, how goes it?" remarks

Smith, with a vague hope that something may have happened. "So so," replies the eloquent Jones, feeling intuitively the deep vacuity of his friend answering to his own. A pause ensues, in which both gentlemen regard each other with an imbecile smile and a fervent pressure of the hand. Smith draws a long breath and looks up the street; Jones sighs heavily and gazes down the street. Another pause, in which both gentlemen disengage their respective hands and glance anxiously around for some conventional avenue of escape. Finally, Smith (with a sudden assumption of having forgotten an important engagement) ejaculates, "Well, I must be off,"—a remark instantly echoed by the voluble Jones, and these gentlemen separate, only to repeat their miserable formula the next day. In the above example I have compassionately shortened the usual leave-taking, which, in skilful hands, may be protracted to a length which I shudder to recall. I have sometimes, when an active participant in these atrocious transactions, lingered in the hope of saying something natural to my friend (feeling that he, too, was groping in the mazy labyrinths of his mind for a like expression), until I have felt that we ought to have been separated by a policeman. It is astonishing how far the most wretched joke will go in these emergencies, and how it will, as it were, convulsively detach the two cohering particles. I have laughed (albeit hysterically) at some witticism under cover of which I escaped, that five minutes afterward I could not perceive possessed a grain of humour. I would advise any person who may fall into this pitiable strait, that, next to getting in the way of a passing dray and being forcibly disconnected, a joke is the most efficacious. A foreign phrase often may be tried with success. I have sometimes known *Au revoir*, pronounced "O-reveer," to have the effect (as it ought) of severing friends.

But this is a harmless habit compared to a certain reprehensible practice in which sundry feeble-minded young men indulge. I have been stopped in the street and enthusiastically accosted by some fashionable young man, who has engaged me in animated conversation, until (quite accidentally) a certain young belle would pass, whom my friend of course saluted. As, by a strange coincidence, this occurred several times in the course of the week, and as my young friend's conversational powers invariably flagged after the lady had passed, I am forced to believe that the deceitful young wretch actually used me as a conventional background to display the graces of his figure to the passing fair. When I detected the trick, of course I made a point of keeping my friend, by strategic movements, with his back toward the young lady, while I bowed to her myself. Since then, I understand that it is a regular custom of these callow youths to encounter each other, with simulated cordiality, some paces in front of the young lady they wish to recognise, so that she cannot possibly cut them. The corner of California and Montgomery Streets is their favourite haunt. They may be easily detected by their furtive expression of eye, which betrays them even in the height of their apparent enthusiasm.

Speaking of eyes, you can generally settle the average gentility and good-breeding of the people you meet in the street by the manner in which they return or evade your glance. "A gentleman," as the Autocrat has wisely said, is always "calm-eyed." There is just enough abstraction in his look to denote his individual power and the capacity for self-contemplation, while he is, nevertheless, quietly and unobtrusively observant. He does not seek, neither does he evade, your observation. Snobs and prigs do the first ; bashful and mean people do the second. There are some men who, on meeting your eye, immediately assume

an expression quite different from the one which they previously wore, which, whether an improvement or not, suggests a disagreeable self-consciousness. Perhaps they fancy they are betraying something. There are others who return your look with unnecessary defiance, which suggests a like concealment. The symptoms of the eye are generally borne out in the figure. A man is very apt to betray his character by the manner in which he appropriates his part of the sidewalk. The man who resolutely keeps the middle of the pavement and deliberately brushes against you, you may be certain would take the last piece of pie at the hotel table, and empty the cream-jug on its way to your cup. The man who sidles by you, keeping close to the houses and selecting the easiest planks, manages to slip through life in some such way, and to evade its sternest duties. The awkward man, who gets in your way, and throws you back upon the man behind you, and so manages to derange the harmonious procession of an entire block, is very apt to do the same thing in political and social economy. The inquisitive man, who deliberately shortens his pace so that he may participate in the confidence you impart to your companion, has an eye not unfamiliar to keyholes, and probably opens his wife's letters. The loud man, who talks with the intention of being overheard, is the same egotist elsewhere. If there was any justice in Iago's sneer, that there were some "so weak of soul that in their sleep they mutter their affairs," what shall be said of the walking reverie babblers? I have met men who were evidently rolling over, "like a sweet morsel under the tongue," some speech they were about to make, and others who were framing curses. I remember once that, while walking behind an apparently respectable old gentleman, he suddenly uttered the exclamation, "Well, I'm d—d!" and then quietly resumed his usual manner. Whether he had

at that moment become impressed with a truly orthodox disbelief in his ultimate salvation, or whether he was simply indignant, I never could tell.

I have been hesitating for some time to speak—or if indeed to speak at all—of that lovely and critic-defying sex, whose bright eyes and voluble prattle have not been without effect in tempering the austerities of my peripatetic musing. I have been humbly thankful that I have been permitted to view their bright dresses and those charming bonnets which seem to have brought the birds and flowers of spring within the dreary limits of the town, and—I trust I shall not be deemed unkind in saying it—my pleasure was not lessened by the reflection that the display, to me at least, was inexpensive. I have walked in—and I fear occasionally on—the train of the loveliest of her sex who has preceded me. If I have sometimes wondered why two young ladies always began to talk vivaciously on the approach of any good-looking fellow; if I have wondered whether the mirror-like qualities of all large show-windows at all influenced their curiosity regarding silks and calicoes; if I have ever entertained the same ungentlemanly thought concerning daguerreotype show-cases; if I have ever misinterpreted the eyeshot which has passed between two pretty women—more searching, exhaustive, and sincere than any of our feeble ogles;—if I have ever committed these or any other impertinences, it was only to retire beaten and discomfited, and to confess that masculine philosophy, while it soars beyond Sirius and the ring of Saturn, stops short at the steel periphery which encompasses the simplest school-girl.

## Charitable Reminiscences.

As the new Benevolent Association has had the effect of withdrawing beggars from the streets, and as professional mendicancy bids fair to be presently ranked with the lost arts, to preserve some records of this noble branch of industry, I have endeavoured to recall certain traits and peculiarities of individual members of the order whom I have known, and whose forms I now miss from their accustomed haunts. In so doing, I confess to feeling a certain regret at this decay of professional begging, for I hold the theory that mankind are bettered by the occasional spectacle of misery, whether simulated or not, on the same principle that our sympathies are enlarged by the fictitious woes of the drama, though we know that the actors are insincere. Perhaps I am indiscreet in saying that I have rewarded the artfully-dressed and well-acted performance of the begging impostor through the same impulse that impelled me to expend a dollar in witnessing the counterfeited sorrows of poor "Triplet," as represented by Charles Wheatleigh. I did not quarrel with deceit in either case. My coin was given in recognition of the sentiment; the moral responsibility rested with the performer.

The principal figure that I now mourn over as lost for ever is one that may have been familiar to many of my readers. It was that of a dark-complexioned, black-eyed, foreign-looking woman, who supported in her arms a sickly

baby. As a pathological phenomenon the baby was especially interesting, having presented the Hippocratic face and other symptoms of immediate dissolution, without change, for the past three years. The woman never verbally solicited alms. Her appearance was always mute, mysterious, and sudden. She made no other appeal than that which the dramatic tableau of herself and baby suggested, with an outstretched hand and deprecating eye sometimes superadded. She usually stood in my doorway, silent and patient, intimating her presence, if my attention were preoccupied, by a slight cough from her baby, whom I shall always believe had its part to play in this little pantomime, and generally obeyed a secret signal from the maternal hand. It was useless for me to refuse alms, to plead business, or affect inattention. She never moved ; her position was always taken with an appearance of latent capabilities of endurance and experience in waiting which never failed to impress me with awe and the futility of any hope of escape. There was also something in the reproachful expression of her eye which plainly said to me, as I bent over my paper, "Go on with your mock sentimentalities and simulated pathos, portray the imaginary sufferings of your bodiless creations, spread your thin web of philosophy ; but look you, sir, here is real misery—here is genuine suffering!" I confess that this artful suggestion usually brought me down. In three minutes after she had thus invested the citadel I usually surrendered at discretion, without a gun having been fired on either side. She received my offering and retired as mutely and mysteriously as she had appeared. Perhaps it was well for me that she did not know her strength. I might have been forced, had this terrible woman been conscious of her real power, to have borrowed money which I could not pay, or have forged a check to purchase immunity from her awful presence. I

hardly know if I make myself understood, and yet I am unable to define my meaning more clearly when I say that there was something in her glance which suggested to the person appealed to, when in the presence of others, a certain idea of some individual responsibility for her sufferings, which, while it never failed to affect him with a mingled sense of ludicrousness and terror, always made an impression of unqualified gravity on the minds of the bystanders. As she has disappeared within the last month, I imagine that she has found a home at the San Francisco Benevolent Association,—at least, I cannot conceive of any charity, however guarded by wholesome checks or sharp-eyed almoners, that could resist that mute apparition. I should like to go there and inquire about her, and also learn if the baby was convalescent or dead ; but I am satisfied that she would rise up, a mute and reproachful appeal, so personal in its artful suggestions, that it would end in the Association instantly transferring her to my hands.

My next familiar mendicant was a vender of printed ballads. These effusions were so stale, atrocious, and unsaleable in their character, that it was easy to detect that hypocrisy which—in imitation of more ambitious beggary—veiled the real eleemosynary appeal under the thin pretext of offering an equivalent. This beggar—an aged female in a rusty bonnet—I unconsciously precipitated upon myself in an evil moment. On our first meeting, while distractedly turning over the ballads, I came upon a certain production entitled, I think, “The Fire Zouave,” and was struck with the truly patriotic and American manner in which “Zouave” was made to rhyme in different stanzas with “grave, brave, save, and glaive.” As I purchased it at once with a gratified expression of countenance, it soon became evident that the act was misconstrued by my poor friend, who from that moment never ceased to haunt me.

Perhaps in the whole course of her precarious existence she had never before sold a ballad. My solitary purchase evidently made me, in her eyes, a customer, and in a measure exalted her vocation ; so thereafter she regularly used to look in at my door, with a chirping, confident air, and the question, "Any more songs to-day?" as though it were some necessary article of daily consumption. I never took any more of her songs, although that circumstance did not shake her faith in my literary taste ; my abstinence from this exciting mental pabulum being probably ascribed to charitable motives. She was finally absorbed by the S.F.B.A., who have probably made a proper disposition of her effects. She was a little old woman, of Celtic origin, predisposed to melancholy, and looking as if she had read most of her ballads.

My next reminiscence takes the shape of a very seedy individual, who had, for three or four years, been vainly attempting to get back to his relatives in Illinois, where sympathising friends and a comfortable almshouse awaited him. Only a few dollars, he informed me,—the uncontributed remainder of the amount necessary to purchase a steerage ticket,—stood in his way. These last few dollars seem to have been most difficult to get, and he had wandered about, a sort of antithetical Flying Dutchman, for ever putting to sea, yet never getting away from shore. He was a "49-er," and had recently been blown up in a tunnel, or had fallen down a shaft, I forget which. This sad accident obliged him to use large quantities of whisky as a liniment, which, he informed me, occasioned the mild fragrance which his garments exhaled. Though belonging to the same class, he was not to be confounded with the unfortunate miner who could not get back to his claim without pecuniary assistance, or the desolate Italian who hopelessly handed you a document in a foreign lan-

guage, very much bethumbed and illegible, which, in your ignorance of the tongue, you couldn't help suspiciously feeling might have been a price current, but which you could see was proffered as an excuse for alms. Indeed, whenever any stranger handed me, without speaking, an open document, which bore the marks of having been carried in the greasy lining of a hat, I always felt safe in giving him a quarter and dismissing him without further questioning. I always noticed that these circular letters, when written in the vernacular, were remarkable for their beautiful caligraphy and grammatical inaccuracy, and that they all seem to have been written by the same hand. Perhaps indigence exercises a peculiar and equal effect upon the handwriting.

I recall a few occasional mendicants whose faces were less familiar. One afternoon a most extraordinary Irishman, with a black eye, a bruised hat, and other traces of past enjoyment, waited upon me with a pitiful story of destitution and want, and concluded by requesting the usual trifle. I replied, with some severity, that if I gave him a dime he would probably spend it for drink. "Be Gorra! but you're roight—I wad that!" he answered promptly. I was so much taken aback by this unexpected exhibition of frankness that I instantly handed over the dime. It seems that truth had survived the wreck of his other virtues; he did get drunk, and, impelled by a like conscientious sense of duty, exhibited himself to me in that state a few hours after, to show that my bounty had not been misapplied.

In spite of the peculiar characters of these reminiscences, I cannot help feeling a certain regret at the decay of professional mendicancy. Perhaps it may be owing to a lingering trace of that youthful superstition which saw in all beggars a possible prince or fairy, and invested their

calling with a mysterious awe. Perhaps it may be from a belief that there is something in the old-fashioned almsgivings and actual contact with misery that is wholesome for both donor and recipient, and that any system which interposes a third party between them is only putting on a thick glove, which, while it preserves us from contagion, absorbs and deadens the kindly pressure of our hand. It is a very pleasant thing to purchase relief from the annoyance and trouble of having to weigh the claims of an afflicted neighbour. As I turn over these printed tickets, which the courtesy of the San Francisco Benevolent Association has—by a slight stretch of the imagination in supposing that any sane unfortunate might rashly seek relief from a newspaper office—conveyed to these editorial hands, I cannot help wondering whether when, in our last extremity, we come to draw upon the Immeasurable Bounty, it will be necessary to present a ticket.

## “Seeing the Steamer Off.”

I HAVE sometimes thought, while watching the departure of an Eastern steamer, that the act of parting from friends—so generally one of bitterness and despondency—is made by an ingenious Californian custom to yield a pleasurable excitement. This luxury of leave-taking, in which most Californians indulge, is often protracted to the hauling in of the gang-plank. Those last words, injunctions, promises, and embraces, which are mournful and depressing perhaps in that privacy demanded on other occasions, are here, by reason of their very publicity, of an edifying and exhilarating character. A parting kiss, blown from the deck of a steamer into a miscellaneous crowd, of course loses much of that sacred solemnity with which foolish superstition is apt to invest it. A broadside of endearing epithets, even when properly aimed and apparently raking the whole wharf, is apt to be impotent and harmless. A husband who prefers to embrace his wife for the last time at the door of her state-room, and finds himself the centre of an admiring group of unconcerned spectators, of course feels himself lifted above any feeling save that of ludicrousness which the situation suggests. The mother, parting from her offspring, should become a Roman matron under the like influences; the lover who takes leave of his sweetheart is not apt to mar the general hilarity by any emotional folly. In fact, this system of delaying our parting senti-

ments until the last moment—this removal of domestic scenery and incident to a public theatre—may be said to be worthy of a stoical and democratic people, and is an event in our lives which may be shared with the humblest coal-passer or itinerant vender of oranges. It is a return to that classic out-of-door experience and mingling of public and domestic economy which so ennobled the straight-nosed Athenian.

So universal is this desire to be present at the departure of any steamer that, aside from the regular crowd of loungers who make their appearance confessedly only to look on, there are others who take advantage of the slightest intimacy to go through the leave-taking formula. People whom you have quite forgotten, people to whom you have been lately introduced, suddenly and unexpectedly make their appearance and wring your hands with fervour. The friend long estranged forgives you nobly at the last moment, to take advantage of this glorious opportunity of "seeing you off." Your bootmaker, tailor, and hatter—haply with no ulterior motives and unaccompanied by official friends—visit you with enthusiasm. You find great difficulty in detaching your relatives and acquaintances from the trunks on which they resolutely seat themselves up to the moment when the paddles are moving, and you are haunted continually by an ill-defined idea that they may be carried off and foisted on you—with the payment of their passage, which, under the circumstances, you could not refuse—for the rest of the voyage. Your friends will make their appearance at the most inopportune moments and from the most unexpected places,—dangling from hawsers, climbing up paddle-boxes, and crawling through cabin windows at the imminent peril of their lives. You are nervous and crushed by this added weight of responsibility. Should you be a stranger, you will find any number of

people on board, who will cheerfully and at a venture take leave of you on the slightest advances made on your part. A friend of mine assures me that he once parted, with great enthusiasm and cordiality, from a party of gentlemen, to him personally unknown, who had apparently mistaken his state-room. This party,—evidently connected with some fire company,—on comparing notes on the wharf, being somewhat dissatisfied with the result of their performances, afterward rendered my friend's position on the hurricane deck one of extreme peril and inconvenience, by reason of skilfully projected oranges and apples, accompanied with some invective. Yet there is certainly something to interest us in the examination of that cheerless damp closet, whose painted wooden walls no furniture or company can make habitable, wherein our friend is to spend so many vapid days and restless nights. The sight of these apartments, yclept *state-rooms*,—Heaven knows why, except it be from their want of cosiness,—is full of keen reminiscences to most Californians who have not outgrown the memories of that dreary interval when, in obedience to Nature's wise compensations, home-sickness was blotted out by sea-sickness, and both at last resolved into a chaotic and distempered dream, whose details we now recognise. The steamer chair that we used to drag out upon the narrow strip of deck and doze in over the pages of a well-thumbed novel; the deck itself, of afternoons redolent with the skins of oranges and bananas, of mornings damp with salt-water and mopping; the netted bulwark, smelling of tar in the tropics and fretted on the weather side with little saline crystals; the villanously compounded odours of victuals from the pantry and oil from the machinery; the young lady that we used to flirt with, and with whom we shared our last novel, adorned with marginal annotations; our own chum; our own bore; the man who was never sea-sick; the two events

of the day, breakfast and dinner, and the dreary interval between; the tremendous importance given to trifling events and trifling people; the young lady who kept a journal; the newspaper, published on board, filled with mild pleasantries and impertinences, elsewhere unendurable; the young lady who sang; the wealthy passenger; the popular passenger; the——

[Let us sit down for a moment until this qualminess, which these associations and some infectious quality of the atmosphere seem to produce, has passed away. What becomes of our steamer friends? Why are we now so apathetic about them? Why is it that we drift away from them so unconcernedly, forgetting even their names and faces? Why, when we do remember them, do we look at them so suspiciously, with an undefined idea that, in the unrestrained freedom of the voyage, they became possessed of some confidence and knowledge of our weaknesses that we never should have imparted? Did we make any such confessions? Perish the thought! The popular man, however, is not now so popular. We have heard finer voices than that of the young lady who sang so sweetly. Our chum's fascinating qualities somehow have deteriorated on land; so have those of the fair young novel-reader, now the wife of an honest miner in Virginia City.]

—The passenger who made so many trips, and exhibited a reckless familiarity with the officers; the officers themselves, now so modest and undemonstrative, a few hours later so all-powerful and important,—these are among the reminiscences of most Californians, and these are to be remembered among the experiences of our friend. Yet he feels, as we all do, that his past experience will be of profit to him, and has already the confident air of an old voyager.

As you stand on the wharf again, and listen to the cries of itinerant fruit venders, you wonder why it is that grief at

parting and the unpleasant novelties of travel are supposed to be assuaged by oranges and apples, even at ruinously low prices. Perhaps it may be, figuratively, the last offering of the fruitful earth, as the passenger commits himself to the bosom of the sterile and unproductive ocean. Even while the wheels are moving and the lines are cast off, some hardy apple merchant, mounted on the top of a pile, concludes a trade with a steerage passenger,—twenty feet interposing between buyer and seller,—and achieves, under these difficulties, the delivery of his wares. Handkerchiefs wave, hurried orders mingle with parting blessings, and the steamer is "off." As you turn your face cityward, and glance hurriedly around at the retreating crowd, you will see a reflection of your own wistful face in theirs, and read the solution of one of the problems which perplex the California enthusiast. Before you lies San Francisco, with her hard angular outlines, her brisk, invigorating breezes, her bright, but unsympathetic sunshine, her restless and energetic population; behind you fades the recollection of changeful but honest skies, of extremes of heat and cold, modified and made enjoyable through social and physical laws, of pastoral landscapes, of accessible Nature in her kindest forms, of inherited virtues, of long-tested customs and habits, of old friends and old faces,—in a word—of HOME!

## Neighbourhoods I Have Moved From.

### I.

A BAY-WINDOW once settled the choice of my house and compensated for many of its inconveniences. When the chimney smoked, or the doors alternately shrunk and swelled, resisting any forcible attempt to open them, or opening of themselves with ghostly deliberation, or when suspicious blotches appeared on the ceiling in rainy weather, there was always the bay-window to turn to for comfort. And the view was a fine one. Alcatraz, Lime Point, Fort Point, and Saucelito were plainly visible over a restless expanse of water that changed continually, glittering in the sunlight, darkening in rocky shadow, or sweeping in mimic waves on a miniature beach below.

Although at first the bay-window was supposed to be sacred to myself and my writing materials, in obedience to some organic law it by and by became a general lounging-place. A rocking-chair and crotchet basket one day found their way there. Then the baby invaded its recesses, fortifying himself behind intrenchments of coloured worsteds and spools of cotton, from which he was only dislodged by concerted assault, and carried lamenting into captivity. A subtle glamour crept over all who came within its influence. To apply one's self to serious work there was an absurdity. An incoming ship, a gleam on the water, a cloud lingering about Tamalpais, were enough to distract the attention.

Reading or writing, the bay-window was always showing something to be looked at. Unfortunately these views were not always pleasant, but the window gave equal prominence and importance to all, without respect to quality.

The landscape in the vicinity was unimproved but not rural. The adjacent lots had apparently just given up bearing scrub-oaks, but had not seriously taken to bricks and mortar. In one direction the vista was closed by the Home of the Inebriates, not in itself a cheerful-looking building, and, as the apparent terminus of a ramble in a certain direction, having all the effect of a moral lesson. To a certain extent, however, this building was an imposition. The enthusiastic members of my family, who confidently expected to see its inmates hilariously disporting themselves at its windows in the different stages of inebriation portrayed by the late W. E. Burton, were much disappointed. The Home was reticent of its secrets. The County Hospital, also in range of the bay-window, showed much more animation. At certain hours of the day convalescents passed in review before the window on their way to an airing. This spectacle was the still more depressing from a singular lack of sociability that appeared to prevail among them. Each man was encompassed by the impenetrable atmosphere of his own peculiar suffering. They did not talk or walk together. From the window I have seen half a dozen sunning themselves against a wall within a few feet of each other, to all appearance utterly oblivious of the fact. Had they but quarrelled or fought,—anything would have been better than this horrible apathy.

The lower end of the street on which the bay-window was situate opened invitingly from a popular thoroughfare, and after beckoning the unwary stranger into its recesses, ended unexpectedly at a frightful precipice. On Sundays, when the travel North-Beachwards was considerable, the

bay-window delighted in the spectacle afforded by unhappy pedestrians who were seduced into taking this street as a short-cut somewhere else. It was amusing to notice how these people invariably, on coming to the precipice, glanced upward to the bay-window and endeavoured to assume a careless air before they retraced their steps, whistling ostentatiously, as if they had previously known all about it. One high-spirited young man in particular, being incited thereto by a pair of mischievous bright eyes in an opposite window, actually descended this fearful precipice rather than return, to the great peril of life and limb, and manifest injury to his Sunday clothes.

Dogs, goats, and horses constituted the *fauna* of our neighbourhood. Possessing the lawless freedom of their normal condition, they still evinced a tender attachment to man and his habitations. Spirited steeds got up *extempore* races on the sidewalks, turning the street into a miniature *Corso*; dogs wrangled in the areas; while from the hill beside the house a goat browsed peacefully upon my wife's geraniums in the flower-pots in the second-storey window. "We had a fine hail-storm last night," remarked a newly arrived neighbour, who had just moved into the adjoining house. It would have been a pity to set him right, as he was quite enthusiastic about the view and the general sanitary qualifications of the locality. So I didn't tell him anything about the goats who were in the habit of using his house as a stepping-stone to the adjoining hill.

But the locality was remarkably healthy. People who fell down the embankments found their wounds heal rapidly in the steady sea-breeze. Ventilation was complete and thorough. The opening of the bay-window produced a current of wholesome air which effectually removed all noxious exhalations, together with the curtains, the hinges of the back door, and the window-shutters. Owing to this pecu-

liarity, some of my writings acquired an extensive circulation and publicity in the neighbourhood, which years in another locality might not have produced. Several articles of wearing apparel, which were mysteriously transposed from our clothes-line to that of an humble though honest neighbour was undoubtedly the result of these sanitary winds. Yet in spite of these advantages I found it convenient in a few months to move. And the result whereof I shall communicate in other papers.

## II.

“A house with a fine garden and extensive shrubbery, in a genteel neighbourhood,” were, if I remember rightly, the general terms of an advertisement which once decided my choice of a dwelling. I should add that this occurred at an early stage of my household experience, when I placed a trustful reliance in advertisements. I have since learned that the most truthful people are apt to indulge a slight vein of exaggeration in describing their own possessions, as though the mere circumstance of going into print were an excuse for a certain kind of mendacity. But I did not fully awaken to this fact until a much later period, when, in answering an advertisement which described a highly advantageous tenement, I was referred to the house I then occupied, and from which a thousand inconveniences were impelling me to move.

The “fine garden” alluded to was not large, but contained several peculiarly shaped flower-beds. I was at first struck with the singular resemblance which they bore to the mutton-chops that are usually brought on the table at hotels and restaurants,—a resemblance the more striking from the sprigs of parsley which they produced freely. One plat in

particular reminded me, not unpleasantly, of a peculiar cake known to my boyhood as "a bolivar." The owner of the property, however, who seemed to be a man of original æsthetic ideas, had banked up one of these beds with bright-coloured sea-shells, so that in rainy weather it suggested an aquarium, and offered the elements of botanical and conchological study in pleasing juxtaposition. I have since thought that the fish-geraniums, which it also bore to a surprising extent, were introduced originally from some such idea of consistency. But it was very pleasant after dinner to ramble up and down the gravelly paths (whose occasional boulders reminded me of the dry bed of a somewhat circuitous mining stream), smoking a cigar, or inhaling the rich aroma of fennel, or occasionally stopping to pluck one of the hollyhocks with which the garden abounded. The prolific qualities of this plant alarmed us greatly, for although, in the first transport of enthusiasm, my wife planted several different kinds of flower-seeds, nothing ever came up but hollyhocks; and although, impelled by the same laudable impulse, I procured a copy of "Downing's Landscape Gardening," and a few gardening tools, and worked for several hours in the garden, my efforts were equally futile.

The "extensive shrubbery" consisted of several dwarfed trees. One was a very weak young weeping willow, so very limp and maudlin, and so evidently bent on establishing its reputation, that it had to be tied up against the house for support. The dampness of that portion of the house was usually attributed to the presence of this lachrymose shrub. Add to these a couple of highly objectionable trees, known, I think, by the name of *Malva*, which made an inordinate show of cheap blossoms that they were continually shedding, and one or two dwarf oaks with scaly leaves and a generally spiteful exterior, and you have

what was not inaptly termed by our Milesian handmaid "the scrubbery."

The gentility of our neighbourhood suffered a blight from the unwholesome vicinity of McGinnis Court. This court was a kind of *cul de sac*, that, on being penetrated, discovered a primitive people living in a state of barbarous freedom, and apparently spending the greater portion of their lives on their own doorsteps. Many of those details of the toilet which a popular prejudice restricts to the dressing-room in other localities were here performed in the open court without fear and without reproach. Early in the week the court was hid in a choking, soapy mist, which arose from innumerable wash-tubs. This was followed in a day or two later by an extraordinary exhibition of wearing apparel of divers colours, fluttering on lines like a display of bunting on shipboard, and whose flapping in the breeze was like irregular discharges of musketry. It was evident also that the court exercised a demoralising influence over the whole neighbourhood. A sanguine property owner once put up a handsome dwelling on the corner of our street and lived therein; but although he appeared frequently on his balcony, clad in a bright crimson dressing-gown, which made him look like a tropical bird of some rare and gorgeous species, he failed to woo any kindred dressing-gown to the vicinity, and only provoked opprobrious epithets from the *gamins* of the court. He moved away shortly after, and on going by the house one day, I noticed a bill of "Rooms to let, with board," posted conspicuously on the Corinthian columns of the porch. McGinnis Court had triumphed. An interchange of civilities at once took place between the court and the servants' area of the palatial mansion, and some of the young men boarders exchanged playful slang with the adolescent members of the court. From that moment we felt that our claims to gentility were forever abandoned.

Yet we enjoyed intervals of unalloyed contentment. When the twilight toned down the hard outlines of the oaks and made shadowy clumps and formless masses of other bushes, it was quite romantic to sit by the window and inhale the faint, sad odour of the fennel in the walks below. Perhaps this economical pleasure was much enhanced by a picture in my memory, whose faded colours the odour of this humble plant never failed to restore. So I often sat there of evenings and closed my eyes until the forms and benches of a country schoolroom came back to me, redolent with the incense of fennel covertly stowed away in my desk, and gazed again in silent rapture on the round red cheeks and long black braids of that peerless creature whose glance had often caused my cheeks to glow over the preternatural collar which at that period of my boyhood it was my pride and privilege to wear. As I fear I may be often thought hypercritical and censorious in these articles, I am willing to record this as one of the advantages of our new house, not mentioned in the advertisement nor chargeable in the rent. May the present tenant, who is a stockbroker, and who impresses me with the idea of having always been called "Mr." from his cradle up, enjoy this advantage, and try sometimes to remember he was a boy!

### III.

Soon after I moved into Happy Valley I was struck with the remarkable infelicity of its title. Generous as Californians are in the use of adjectives, this passed into the domain of irony. But I was inclined to think it sincere,—the production of a weak but gushing mind, just as the feminine nomenclature of streets in the vicinity was evidently bestowed by one in habitual communion with "Friendship's Gifts" and "Affection's Offerings."

Our house on Laura Matilda Street looked somewhat like a toy Swiss cottage,—a style of architecture so prevalent, that in walking down the block it was quite difficult to resist an impression of fresh glue and pine shavings. The few shade-trees might have belonged originally to those oval Christmas boxes which contain toy villages; and even the people who sat by the windows had a stiffness that made them appear surprisingly unreal and artificial. A little dog belonging to a neighbour was known to the members of my household by the name of "Glass," from the general suggestion he gave of having been spun of that article. Perhaps I have somewhat exaggerated these illustrations of the dapper nicety of our neighbourhood,—a neatness and conciseness which I think have a general tendency to belittle, dwarf, and contract their objects. For we gradually fell into small ways and narrow ideas, and to some extent squared the round world outside to the correct angles of Laura Matilda Street.

One reason for this insincere quality may have been the fact that the very foundations of our neighbourhood were artificial. Laura Matilda Street was "made ground." The land, not yet quite reclaimed, was continually struggling with its old enemy. We had not been long in our new home before we found an older tenant, not yet wholly divested of his rights, who sometimes showed himself in clammy perspiration on the basement walls, whose damp breath chilled our dining-room, and in the night struck a mortal chilliness through the house. There were no patent fastenings that could keep him out, no writ of unlawful detainer that could eject him. In the winter his presence was quite palpable; he sapped the roots of the trees, he gurgled under the kitchen floor, he wrought an unwholesome greenness on the side of the veranda. In summer he became invisible, but still exercised a familiar influence over

the locality. He planted little stitches in the small of the back, sought out old aches and weak joints, and sportively punched the tenants of the Swiss cottage under the ribs. He inveigled little children to play with him, but his plays generally ended in scarlet-fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, and measles. He sometimes followed strong men about until they sickened suddenly and took to their beds. But he kept the green plants in good order, and was very fond of verdure, bestowing it even upon lath and plaster and soulless stone. He was generally invisible, as I have said ; but some time after I had moved, I saw him one morning from the hill stretching his grey wings over the valley, like some fabulous vampire, who had spent the night sucking the wholesome juices of the sleepers below, and was sluggish from the effects of his repast. It was then that I recognised him as Malaria, and knew his abode to be the dread Valley of the Shadow of Miasma,—miscalled the Happy Valley !

On week-days there was a pleasant melody of boiler-making from the foundries, and the gasworks in the vicinity sometimes lent a mild perfume to the breeze. Our street was usually quiet, however,—a footfall being sufficient to draw the inhabitants to their front windows, and to oblige an incautious trespasser to run the gauntlet of batteries of blue and black eyes on either side of the way. A carriage passing through it communicated a singular thrill to the floors, and caused the china on the dining-table to rattle. Although we were comparatively free from the prevailing winds, wandering gusts sometimes got bewildered and strayed unconsciously into our street, and finding an unencumbered field, incontinently set up a shriek of joy, and went gleefully to work on the clothes-lines and chimney-pots, and had a good time generally until they were quite exhausted. I have a very vivid picture in my memory of an organ-grinder who was at one time blown into the end

of our street, and actually blown through it in spite of several ineffectual efforts to come to a stand before the different dwellings, but who was finally whirled out of the other extremity, still playing and vainly endeavouring to pursue his unhallowed calling. But these were noteworthy exceptions to the calm and even tenor of our life.

There was contiguity but not much sociability in our neighbourhood. From my bedroom window I could plainly distinguish the peculiar kind of victuals spread on my neighbour's dining-table; while, on the other hand, he obtained an equally uninterrupted view of the mysteries of my toilet. Still that "low vice, curiosity," was regulated by certain laws, and a kind of rude chivalry invested our observation. A pretty girl, whose bedroom window was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, was once brought under the focus of an opera-glass in the hands of one of our ingenious youth; but this act met such prompt and universal condemnation, as an unmanly advantage, from the lips of married men and bachelors who didn't own opera-glasses, that it was never repeated.

With this brief sketch I conclude my record of the neighbourhoods I have moved from. I have moved from many others since then, but they have generally presented features not dissimilar to the three I have endeavoured to describe in these pages. I offer them as types containing the salient peculiarities of all. Let no inconsiderate reader rashly move on account of them. My experience has not been cheaply bought. From the nettle Change I have tried to pluck the flower Security. Draymen have grown rich at my expense. House-agents have known me and were glad, and landlords have risen up to meet me from afar. The force of habit impels me still to consult all the bills I see in the streets, nor can the war telegrams divert my first attention from the advertising columns of the daily papers. I

repeat, let no man think I have disclosed the weaknesses of the neighbourhood, nor rashly open that closet which contains the secret skeleton of his dwelling. My carpets have been altered to fit all sized odd-shaped apartments from parallelopiped to hexagons. Much of my furniture has been distributed among my former dwellings. These limbs have stretched upon uncarpeted floors or have been let down suddenly from imperfectly established bedsteads. I have dined in the parlour and slept in the back kitchen. Yet the result of these sacrifices and trials may be briefly summed up in the statement that I am now on the eve of removal from my PRESENT NEIGHBOURHOOD.

## My Suburban Residence.

I LIVE in the suburbs. My residence, to quote the pleasing fiction of the advertisement, "is within fifteen minutes' walk of the City Hall." Why the City Hall should be considered as an eligible terminus of anybody's walk under any circumstances, I have not been able to determine. Never having walked from my residence to that place, I am unable to verify the assertion, though I may state as a purely abstract and separate proposition, that it takes me the better part of an hour to reach Montgomery Street.

My selection of locality was a compromise between my wife's desire to go into the country and my own predilections for civic habitation. Like most compromises, it ended in retaining the objectionable features of both propositions; I procured the inconveniences of the country without losing the discomforts of the city. I increased my distance from the butcher and greengrocer without approximating to herds and kitchen-gardens. But I anticipate.

Fresh air was to be the principal thing sought for. That there might be too much of this did not enter into my calculations. The first day I entered my residence, it blew; the second day was windy; the third, fresh, with a strong breeze stirring; on the fourth, it blew; on the fifth, there was a gale, which has continued to the present writing.

That the air is fresh the above statement sufficiently

establishes. That it is bracing I argue from the fact that I find it impossible to open the shutters on the windward side of the house. That it is healthy I am also convinced, believing that there is no other force in Nature that could so buffet and ill-use a person without serious injury to him. Let me offer an instance. The path to my door crosses a slight eminence. The unconscious visitor, a little exhausted by the ascent and the general effects of the gentle gales which he has faced in approaching my hospitable mansion, relaxes his efforts, smooths his brow, and approaches with a fascinating smile. Rash and too confident man! The wind delivers a succession of rapid blows, and he is thrown back. He staggers up again, in the language of the P. R., "smiling and confident." The wind now makes for a vulnerable point, and gets his hat in chancery. All ceremony is now thrown away; the luckless wretch seizes his hat with both hands and charges madly at the front door. Inch by inch the wind contests the ground; another struggle and he stands upon the veranda. On such occasions I make it a point to open the door myself, with a calmness and serenity that shall offer a marked contrast to his feverish and excited air, and shall throw suspicion of inebriety upon him. If he be inclined to timidity and bashfulness, during the rest of the evening he is all too conscious of the disarrangement of his hair and cravat. If he is less sensitive, the result is often more distressing. A valued elderly friend once called upon me after undergoing a twofold struggle with the wind and a large Newfoundland dog (which I keep for reasons hereinafter stated), and not only his hat, but his wig had suffered. He spent the evening with me, totally unconscious of the fact that his hair presented the singular spectacle of having been parted diagonally from the right temple to the left ear. When ladies called, my wife preferred to receive them.

They were generally hysterical, and often in tears. I remember, one Sunday, to have been startled by what appeared to be the balloon from Hayes Valley drifting rapidly past my conservatory, closely followed by the Newfoundland dog. I rushed to the front door, but was anticipated by my wife. A strange lady appeared at lunch, but the phenomenon remained otherwise unaccounted for. Egress from my residence is much more easy. My guests seldom "stand upon the order of their going, but go at once," the Newfoundland dog playfully harassing their rear. I was standing one day, with my hand on the open hall door, in serious conversation with the minister of the parish, when the back door was cautiously opened. The watchful breeze seized the opportunity, and charged through the defenceless passage. The front door closed violently in the middle of a sentence, precipitating the reverend gentleman into the garden. The Newfoundland dog, with that sagacity for which his race is so distinguished, at once concluded that a personal collision had taken place between myself and visitor, and flew to my defence. The reverend gentleman never called again.

The Newfoundland dog above alluded to was part of a system of protection which my suburban home once required. Robberies were frequent in the neighbourhood, and my only fowl fell a victim to the spoiler's art. One night I awoke and found a man in my room. With singular delicacy and respect for the feelings of others, he had been careful not to awaken any of the sleepers, and retired upon my rising without waiting for any suggestion. Touched by his delicacy, I forbore giving the alarm until after he had made good his retreat. I then wanted to go after a policeman, but my wife remonstrated, as this would leave the house exposed. Remembering the gentlemanly conduct of the burglar, I suggested the plan of following

him and requesting him to give the alarm as he went in town. But this proposition was received with equal disfavour. The next day I procured a dog and a revolver. The former went off, but the latter wouldn't. I then got a new dog and chained him, and a duelling pistol with a hair-trigger. The result was so far satisfactory that neither could be approached with safety, and for some time I left them out, indifferently, during the night. But the chain one day gave way, and the dog, evidently having no other attachment to the house, took the opportunity to leave. His place was soon filled by the Newfoundland, whose fidelity and sagacity I have just recorded.

Space is one of the desirable features of my surburban residence. I do not know the number of acres the grounds contain except from the inordinate quantity of hose required for irrigating. I perform daily, like some gentle shepherd, upon a quarter-inch pipe without any visible result, and have had serious thoughts of contracting with some dis-banded fire company for their hose and equipments. It is quite a walk to the woodhouse. Every day some new feature of the grounds is discovered. My youngest boy was one day missing for several hours. His head—a peculiarly venerable and striking object—was at last discovered just above the grass at some distance from the house. On examination, he was found comfortably seated in a disused drain, in company with a silver spoon and a dead rat. On being removed from this locality he howled dismally and refused to be comforted.

The view from my surburban residence is fine. Lone Mountain, with its white obelisks, is a suggestive if not cheering termination of the vista in one direction, while the old receiving vault of Yerba Buena Cemetery limits the view in another. Most of the funerals which take place pass my house. My children, with the charming imitateness that

belongs to youth, have caught the spirit of these passing corteges, and reproduce in the back yard, with creditable skill, the salient features of the lugubrious procession. A doll, from whose features all traces of vitality and expression have been removed, represents the deceased. Yet unfortunately I have been obliged to promise them more active participation in this ceremony at some future time, and I fear that they look anxiously forward with the glowing impatience of youth to the speedy removal of some one of my circle of friends. I am told that the eldest, with the unsophisticated frankness that belongs to his age, made a personal request to that effect to one of my acquaintances. One singular result of the frequency of these funerals is the development of a critical and fastidious taste in such matters on the part of myself and family. If I may so express myself without irreverence, we seldom turn out for anything less than six carriages. Any number over this is usually breathlessly announced by Bridget as "Here's another, mum,—and a good long one."

With these slight drawbacks my suburban residence is charming. To the serious poet and writer of elegiac verses, the aspect of Nature, viewed from my veranda, is suggestive. I myself have experienced moments when the "sad mechanic exercise" of verse would have been of infinite relief. The following stanzas, by a young friend who has been stopping with me for the benefit of his health, addressed to a duck that frequented a small pond in the vicinity of my mansion, may be worthy of perusal. I think I have met the idea conveyed in the first verse in some of Hood's prose, but as my friend assures me that Hood was too conscientious to appropriate anything not his own, I conclude I am mistaken.



belongs to youth. He might the spirit of those  
 outages, and sympathy with the weak part, with its  
 skill, the talent, the the supplest person  
 did, from whom we all craved of ability and  
 also have been much surprised the dearest  
 unobtrusively I have been obliged to provide the  
 active performance of a duty at some time  
 and I feel that they are almost forward with the  
 enjoyment of youth and the removal of some  
 my share of trouble. He will that the eldest,  
 accomplished woman, thus belongs to his age,  
 personal respect to the fact in one of my works.  
 One singular result of the frequency of these favors  
 development of a good and sensible taste  
 mature in the girl's growth and family. If I  
 myself myself without prejudice, we without fear  
 anything less than perfect. Any number  
 is usually increased by Dwight as  
 another man, and long one."

With these things I have my children and  
 charming. To the old part and will of style  
 the aspect of things, but from my window, in  
 this. I myself have pleasant moments when I  
 merchant's name, I would have least of  
 relief. The woman, by a young friend  
 been stopping with him the benefit of his  
 addressed to a friend. Suspended a small part  
 of my mind, say in another part.

quality of its oysters. It is stated that a dredger one day raked up a large bell, which proved to belong to the City Hall, and led to the discovery of the cupola of that building. The attention of the Government was at once directed to the spot. The Bay of San Francisco was speedily drained by a system of patent siphons, and the city, deeply embedded in mud, brought to light after a burial of many centuries. The City Hall, Post Office, Mint, and Custom House were readily recognised by the large full-fed barnacles which adhered to their walls. Shortly afterwards the first skeleton was discovered, that of a broker, whose position in the upper strata of mud nearer the surface was supposed to be owing to the exceeding buoyancy or inflation of scrip which he had secured about his person while endeavouring to escape. Many skeletons, supposed to be those of females, encompassed in that peculiar steel coop or cage which seems to have been worn by the women of that period, were also found in the upper stratum. Alexis von Puffer, in his admirable work on San Francisco, accounts for the position of these unfortunate creatures by asserting that the steel cage was originally the frame of a parachute-like garment which distended the skirt, and in the submersion of the city prevented them from sinking. "If anything," says Von Puffer, "could have been wanting to add intensity to the horrible catastrophe which took place as the waters first entered the city, it would have been furnished in the forcible separation of the sexes at this trying moment. Buoyed up by their peculiar garments, the female population instantly ascended to the surface. As the drowning husband turned his eyes above, what must have been his agony as he saw his wife shooting upward, and knew that he was debarred the privilege of perishing with her? To the lasting honour of the male inhabitants be it said that but few seem to have availed themselves of their wife's

superior levity. Only one skeleton was found still grasping the ankles of another in their upward journey to the surface."

For many years California had been subject to slight earthquakes, more or less generally felt, but not of sufficient importance to awaken anxiety or fear. Perhaps the absorbing nature of the San Franciscans' pursuit of gold-getting, which metal seems to have been valuable in those days, and actually used as a medium of currency, rendered the inhabitants reckless of all other matters. Everything tends to show that the calamity was totally unlooked for. We quote the graphic language of Schwappelfurt :—

"The morning of the tremendous catastrophe probably dawned upon the usual restless crowd of gold-getters intent upon their several avocations. The streets were filled with the expanded figures of gaily dressed women, acknowledging with coy glances the respectful salutations of beaux as they gracefully raised their remarkable cylindrical head-coverings, a model of which is still preserved in the Honolulu Museum. The brokers had gathered at their respective temples. The shopmen were exhibiting their goods. The idlers, or 'Bummers,'—a term applied to designate an aristocratic privileged class, who enjoyed immunities from labour, and from whom a majority of the rulers were chosen,—were listlessly regarding the promenaders from the street-corners or the doors of their bibulous temple. A slight premonitory thrill runs through the city. The busy life of this restless microcosm is arrested. The shopkeeper pauses as he elevates the goods to bring them into a favourable light, and the glib professional recommendation sticks on his tongue. In the drinking saloon the glass is checked half-way to the lips; on the streets the promenaders pause. Another thrill, and the city begins to go down, a few of the more persistent toppers turning off their liquor at the same

moment. Beyond a terrible sensation of nausea, the crowds who now throng the streets do not realise the extent of the catastrophe. The waters of the bay recede at first from the centre of depression, assuming a concave shape, the outer edge of the circle towering many thousand feet above the city. Another convulsion and the water instantly resumes its level. The city is smoothly engulfed nine thousand feet below, and the regular swell of the Pacific calmly rolls over it. "Terrible," says Schwappelfurt, in conclusion, "as the calamity must have been in direct relation to the individuals immediately concerned therein, we cannot but admire its artistic management, the division of the catastrophe into three periods, the completeness of the cataclysms, and the rare combination of sincerity of intention with felicity of execution."

*SPANISH AND AMERICAN LEGENDS.*



## The Legend of Monte del Diablo.

THE cautious reader will detect a lack of authenticity in the following pages. I am not a cautious reader myself, yet I confess with some concern to the absence of much documentary evidence in support of the singular incident I am about to relate. Disjointed memoranda, the proceedings of *ayuntamientos* and early departmental *juntas*, with other records of a primitive and superstitious people, have been my inadequate authorities. It is but just to state, however, that though this particular story lacks corroboration, in ransacking the Spanish archives of Upper California I have met with many more surprising and incredible stories, attested and supported to a degree that would have placed this legend beyond a cavil or doubt. I have, also, never lost faith in the legend myself, and in so doing have profited much from the examples of divers grant-claimants, who have often jostled me in their more practical researches, and who have my sincere sympathy at the scepticism of a modern hard-headed and practical world.

For many years after Father Junipero Serro first rang his bell in the wilderness of Upper California, the spirit which animated that adventurous priest did not wane. The conversion of the heathen went on rapidly in the establishment of Missions throughout the land. So sedulously did the good Fathers set about their work, that around their isolated chapels there presently arose *adobe* huts, whose mud-

plastered and savage tenants partook regularly of the provisions, and occasionally of the Sacrament, of their pious hosts. Nay, so great was their progress, that one zealous Padre is reported to have administered the Lord's Supper one Sabbath morning to "over three hundred heathen salvages." It was not to be wondered that the Enemy of Souls, being greatly incensed thereat, and alarmed at his decreasing popularity, should have grievously tempted and embarrassed these holy Fathers, as we shall presently see.

Yet they were happy, peaceful days for California. The vagrant keels of prying Commerce had not as yet ruffled the lordly gravity of her bays. No torn and ragged gulch betrayed the suspicion of golden treasure. The wild oats drooped idly in the morning heat or wrestled with the afternoon breezes. Deer and antelope dotted the plain. The watercourses brawled in their familiar channels, nor dreamed of ever shifting their regular tide. The wonders of the Yosemite and Calaveras were as yet unrecorded. The holy Fathers noted little of the landscape beyond the barbaric prodigality with which the quick soil repaid the sowing. A new conversion, the advent of a saint's day, or the baptism of an Indian baby, was at once the chronicle and marvel of their day.

At this blissful epoch there lived at the Mission of San Pablo Father José Antonio Haro, a worthy brother of the Society of Jesus. He was of tall and cadaverous aspect. A somewhat romantic history had given a poetic interest to his lugubrious visage. While a youth pursuing his studies at famous Salamanca, he had become enamoured of the charms of Doña Carmen de Torrencevara, as that lady passed to her matutinal devotions. Untoward circumstances, hastened, perhaps, by a wealthier suitor, brought this amour to a disastrous issue, and Father José entered a monastery, taking upon himself the vows of celibacy. It

was here that his natural fervour and poetic enthusiasm conceived expression as a missionary. A longing to convert the uncivilised heathen succeeded his frivolous earthly passion, and a desire to explore and develop unknown fastnesses continually possessed him. In his flashing eye and sombre exterior was detected a singular commingling of the discreet Las Casas and the impetuous Balboa.

Fired by this pious zeal, Father José went forward in the van of Christian pioneers. On reaching Mexico he obtained authority to establish the Mission of San Pablo. Like the good Junipero, accompanied only by an acolyte and muleteer, he unsaddled his mules in a dusky cañon, and rang his bell in the wilderness. The savages—a peaceful, inoffensive, and inferior race—presently flocked around him. The nearest military post was far away, which contributed much to the security of these pious pilgrims, who found their open trustfulness and amiability better fitted to repress hostility than the presence of an armed, suspicious, and brawling soldiery. So the good Father José said matins and prime, mass and vespers, in the heart of sin and heathenism, taking no heed to himself, but looking only to the welfare of the Holy Church. Conversions soon followed, and on the 7th of July 1760, the first Indian baby was baptized,—an event which, as Father José piously records, “exceeds the riches of gold or precious jewels or the chancing upon the Ophir of Solomon.” I quote this incident as best suited to show the ingenious blending of poetry and piety which distinguished Father José’s record.

The Mission of San Pablo progressed and prospered, until the pious founder thereof, like the infidel Alexander, might have wept that there were no more heathen worlds to conquer. But his ardent and enthusiastic spirit could not long brook an idleness that seemed begotten of sin; and one pleasant August morning in the year of grace 1770,

Father José issued from the outer court of the Mission building, equipped to explore the field for new missionary labours.

Nothing could exceed the quiet gravity and unpretentiousness of the little cavalcade. First rode a stout muleteer, leading a pack-mule laden with the provisions of the party, together with a few cheap crucifixes and hawks' bells. After him came the devout Padre José, bearing his breviary and cross, with a black *serapa* thrown around his shoulders ; while on either side trotted a dusky convert, anxious to show a proper sense of their regeneration by acting as guides into the wilds of their heathen brethren. Their new condition was agreeably shown by the absence of the usual mud-plaster, which in their unconverted state they assumed to keep away vermin and cold. The morning was bright and propitious. Before their departure, mass had been said in the chapel, and the protection of St. Ignatius invoked against all contingent evils, but especially against bears, which, like the fiery dragons of old, seemed to cherish unconquerable hostility to the Holy Church.

As they wound through the cañon, charming birds disported upon boughs and sprays, and sober quails piped from the alders ; the willowy watercourses gave a musical utterance, and the long grass whispered on the hillside. On entering the deeper defiles, above them towered dark green masses of pine, and occasionally the *madroño* shook its bright scarlet berries. As they toiled up many a steep ascent, Father José sometimes picked up fragments of scoria, which spake to his imagination of direful volcanoes and impending earthquakes. To the less scientific mind of the muleteer Ignacio they had even a more terrifying significance ; and he once or twice snuffed the air suspiciously, and declared that it smelt of sulphur. So the first day of their journey wore away, and at night they encamped without having met a single heathen face.

It was on this night that the Enemy of Souls appeared to Ignacio in an appalling form. He had retired to a secluded part of the camp and had sunk upon his knees in prayerful meditation, when he looked up and perceived the Arch-Fiend in the likeness of a monstrous bear. The Evil One was seated on his hind legs immediately before him, with his fore-paws joined together just below his black muzzle. Wisely conceiving this remarkable attitude to be in mockery and derision of his devotions, the worthy muleteer was transported with fury. Seizing an arquebuse, he instantly closed his eyes and fired. When he had recovered from the effects of the terrific discharge, the apparition had disappeared. Father José, awakened by the report, reached the spot only in time to chide the muleteer for wasting powder and ball in a contest with one whom a single ave would have been sufficient to utterly discomfit. What further reliance he placed on Ignacio's story is not known ; but, in commemoration of a worthy Californian custom, the place was called *La Cañada de la Tentacion del Pio Muletero*, or "The Glen of the Temptation of the Pious Muleteer," a name which it retains to this day.

The next morning the party, issuing from a narrow gorge, came upon a long valley, sear and burnt with the shadeless heat. Its lower extremity was lost in a fading line of low hills, which, gathering might and volume toward the upper end of the valley, upheaved a stupendous bulwark against the breezy north. The peak of this awful spur was just touched by a fleecy cloud that shifted to and fro like a banneret. Father José gazed at it with mingled awe and admiration. By a singular coincidence, the muleteer Ignacio uttered the simple ejaculation "*Diablo !*"

As they penetrated the valley, they soon began to miss the agreeable life and companionable echoes of the cañon they had quitted. Huge fissures in the parched soil seemed

to gape as with thirsty mouths. A few squirrels darted from the earth and disappeared as mysteriously before the jingling mules. A grey wolf trotted leisurely along just ahead. But whichever way Father José turned, the mountain always asserted itself and arrested his wandering eye. Out of the dry and arid valley it seemed to spring into cooler and bracing life. Deep cavernous shadows dwelt along its base; rocky fastnesses appeared midway of its elevation; and on either side huge black hills diverged like massy roots from a central trunk. His lively fancy pictured these hills peopled with a majestic and intelligent race of savages; and looking into futurity, he already saw a monstrous cross crowning the dome-like summit. Far different were the sensations of the muleteer, who saw in those awful solitudes only fiery dragons, colossal bears, and breakneck trails. The converts, Concepcion and Incarnation, trotting modestly beside the Padre, recognised perhaps some manifestation of their former weird mythology.

At nightfall they reached the base of the mountain. Here Father José unpacked his mules, said vespers, and, formally ringing his bell, called upon the Gentiles within hearing to come and accept the holy faith. The echoes of the black frowning hills around him caught up the pious invitation and repeated it at intervals; but no Gentiles appeared that night. Nor were the devotions of the muleteer again disturbed, although he afterward asserted that, when the Father's exhortation was ended, a mocking peal of laughter came from the mountain. Nothing daunted by these intimations of the near hostility of the Evil One, Father José declared his intention to ascend the mountain at early dawn, and before the sun rose the next morning he was leading the way.

The ascent was in many places difficult and dangerous. Huge fragments of rock often lay across the trail, and after

a few hours' climbing they were forced to leave their mules in a little gully and continue the ascent afoot. Unaccustomed to such exertion, Father José often stopped to wipe the perspiration from his thin cheeks. As the day wore on a strange silence oppressed them. Except the occasional pattering of a squirrel, or a rustling in the *chimisal* bushes, there were no signs of life. The half-human print of a bear's foot sometimes appeared before them, at which Ignacio always crossed himself piously. The eye was sometimes cheated by a dripping from the rocks, which on closer inspection proved to be a resinous oily liquid with an abominable sulphurous smell. When they were within a short distance of the summit, the discreet Ignacio, selecting a sheltered nook for the camp, slipped aside and busied himself in preparations for the evening, leaving the holy Father to continue the ascent alone. Never was there a more thoughtless act of prudence, never a more imprudent piece of caution. Without noticing the desertion, buried in pious reflection, Father José pushed mechanically on, and, reaching the summit, cast himself down and gazed upon the prospect.

Below him lay a succession of valleys opening into each other like gentle lakes, until they were lost to the southward. Westerly the distant range hid the bosky *cañada* which sheltered the Mission of San Pablo. In the farther distance the Pacific Ocean stretched away, bearing a cloud of fog upon its bosom, which crept through the entrance of the bay, and rolled thickly between him and the north-eastward; the same fog hid the base of mountain and the view beyond. Still from time to time the fleecy veil parted, and timidly disclosed charming glimpses of mighty rivers, mountain defiles, and rolling plains, sear with ripened oats and bathed in the glow of the setting sun. As Father José gazed, he was penetrated with a pious longing. Already

his imagination, filled with enthusiastic conceptions, beheld all that vast expanse gathered under the mild sway of the holy faith and peopled with zealous converts. Each little knoll in fancy became crowned with a chapel; from each dark cañon gleamed the white walls of a Mission building. Growing bolder in his enthusiasm and looking farther into futurity, he beheld a new Spain rising on these savage shores. He already saw the spires of stately cathedrals, the domes of palaces, vineyards, gardens, and groves. Convents, half hid among the hills, peeping from plantations of branching limes, and long processions of chanting nuns wound through the defiles. So completely was the good Father's conception of the future confounded with the past, that even in their choral strain the well-remembered accents of Carmen struck his ear. He was busied in these fanciful imaginings, when suddenly over that extended prospect the faint distant tolling of a bell rang sadly out and died. It was the Angelus. Father José listened with superstitious exaltation. The Mission of San Pablo was far away, and the sound must have been some miraculous omen. But never before, to his enthusiastic sense, did the sweet seriousness of this angelic symbol come with such strange significance. With the last faint peal his glowing fancy seemed to cool; the fog closed in below him, and the good Father remembered he had not had his supper. He had risen and was wrapping his *serapa* around him, when he perceived for the first time that he was not alone.

Nearly opposite, and where should have been the faithless Ignacio, a grave and decorous figure was seated. His appearance was that of an elderly hidalgo, dressed in mourning, with mustaches of iron-grey carefully waxed and twisted round a pair of lantern-jaws. The monstrous hat and prodigious feather, the enormous ruff and exaggerated

trunk-hose, contrasted with a frame shrivelled and wizened, all belonged to a century previous. Yet Father José was not astonished. His adventurous life and poetic imagination, continually on the look-out for the marvellous, gave him a certain advantage over the practical and material minded. He instantly detected the diabolical quality of his visitant and was prepared. With equal coolness and courtesy he met the cavalier's obeisance.

"I ask your pardon, Sir Priest," said the stranger, "for disturbing your meditations. Pleasant they must have been, and right fanciful, I imagine, when occasioned by so fair a prospect."

"Worldly, perhaps, Sir Devil,—for such I take you to be," said the holy Father, as the stranger bowed his black plumes to the ground; "worldly, perhaps; for it hath pleased Heaven to retain even in our regenerated state much that pertaineth to the flesh, yet still, I trust, not without some speculation for the welfare of the Holy Church. In dwelling upon yon fair expanse, mine eyes have been graciously opened with prophetic inspiration, and the promise of the heathen as an inheritance hath marvellously recurred to me. For there can be none lack such diligence in the true faith but may see that even the conversion of these pitiful salvages hath a meaning. As the blessed St. Ignatius discreetly observes," continued Father José, clearing his throat and slightly elevating his voice, "'the heathen is given to the warriors of Christ, even as the pearls of rare discovery which gladden the hearts of shipmen.' Nay, I might say"——

But here the stranger, who had been wrinkling his brows and twisting his mustaches with well-bred patience, took advantage of an oratorical pause.

"It grieves me, Sir Priest, to interrupt the current of your eloquence as discourteously as I have already broken

your meditations ; but the day already waneth to night. I have a matter of serious import to make with you, could I entreat your cautious consideration a few moments."

Father José hesitated. The temptation was great, and the prospect of acquiring some knowledge of the Great Enemy's plans not the least trifling object. And, if the truth must be told, there was a certain decorum about the stranger that interested the Padre. Though well aware of the Protean shapes the Arch-Fiend could assume, and though free from the weaknesses of the flesh, Father José was not above the temptations of the spirit. Had the Devil appeared, as in the case of the pious St. Anthony, in the likeness of a comely damsel, the good Father, with his certain experience of the deceitful sex, would have whisked her away in the saying of a paternoster. But there was, added to the security of age, a grave sadness about the stranger,—a thoughtful consciousness, as of being at a great moral disadvantage,—which at once decided him on a magnanimous course of conduct.

The stranger then proceeded to inform him that he had been diligently observing the holy Father's triumphs in the valley. That, far from being greatly exercised thereat, he had been only grieved to see so enthusiastic and chivalrous an antagonist wasting his zeal in a hopeless work. For, he observed, the issue of the great battle of Good and Evil had been otherwise settled, as he would presently show him. "It wants but a few moments of night," he continued, "and over this interval of twilight, as you know, I have been given complete control. Look to the west."

As the Padre turned, the stranger took his enormous hat from his head and waved it three times before him. At each sweep of the prodigious feather the fog grew thinner, until it melted impalpably away, and the former landscape returned, yet warm with the glowing sun. As Father José

gazed a strain of martial music arose from the valley, and issuing from a deep cañon, the good Father beheld a long cavalcade of gallant cavaliers, habited like his companion. As they swept down the plain, they were joined by like processions, that slowly defiled from every ravine and cañon of the mysterious mountain. From time to time the peal of a trumpet swelled fitfully upon the breeze; the cross of Santiago glittered, and the royal banners of Castile and Aragon waved over the moving column. So they moved on solemnly toward the sea, where, in the distance, Father José saw stately caravels, bearing the same familiar banner, awaiting them. The good Padre gazed with conflicting emotions, and the serious voice of the stranger broke the silence.

"Thou hast beheld, Sir Priest, the fading footprints of adventurous Castile. Thou hast seen the declining glory of old Spain,—declining as yonder brilliant sun. The sceptre she hath wrested from the heathen is fast dropping from her decrepit and fleshless grasp. The children she hath fostered shall know her no longer. The soil she hath acquired shall be lost to her as irrevocably as she herself hath thrust the Moor from her own Granada."

The stranger paused, and his voice seemed broken by emotion; at the same time, Father José, whose sympathising heart yearned toward the departing banners, cried in poignant accents—

"Farewell, ye gallant cavaliers and Christian soldiers! Farewell, thou, Nuñez de Balboa! thou, Alonzo de Ojeda! and thou, most venerable Las Casas! farewell, and may Heaven prosper still the seed ye left behind!"

Then turning to the stranger, Father José beheld him gravely draw his pocket-handkerchief from the basket-hilt of his rapier and apply it decorously to his eyes.

"Pardon this weakness, Sir Priest," said the cavalier

apologetically ; "but these worthy gentlemen were ancient friends of mine, and have done me many a delicate service,—much more, perchance, than these poor sables may signify," he added, with a grim gesture toward the mourning suit he wore.

Father José was too much preoccupied in reflection to notice the equivocal nature of this tribute, and, after a few moments' silence, said, as if continuing his thought—

"But the seed they have planted shall thrive and prosper on this fruitful soil."

As if answering the interrogatory, the stranger turned to the opposite direction, and again waving his hat, said, in the same serious tone—

"Look to the East !"

The Father turned, and, as the fog broke away before the waving plume, he saw that the sun was rising. Issuing with its bright beams through the passes of the snowy mountains beyond appeared a strange and motley crew. Instead of the dark and romantic visages of his last phantom train, the Father beheld with strange concern the blue eyes and flaxen hair of a Saxon race. In place of martial airs and musical utterance, there rose upon the ear a strange din of harsh gutturals and singular sibilation. Instead of the decorous tread and stately mien of the cavaliers of the former vision, they came pushing, bustling, panting, and swaggering. And as they passed, the good Father noticed that giant trees were prostrated as with the breath of a tornado, and the bowels of the earth were torn and rent as with a convulsion. And Father José looked in vain for holy cross or Christian symbol ; there was but one that seemed an ensign, and he crossed himself with holy horror as he perceived it bore the effigy of a bear.

"Who are these swaggering Ishmaelites?" he asked, with something of asperity in his tone.

The stranger was gravely silent.

"What do they here, with neither cross nor holy symbol?" he again demanded.

"Have you the courage to see, Sir Priest?" responded the stranger quietly.

Father José felt his crucifix, as a lonely traveller might his rapier, and assented.

"Step under the shadow of my plume," said the stranger.

Father José stepped beside him, and they instantly sank through the earth.

When he opened his eyes, which had remained closed in prayerful meditation during his rapid descent, he found himself in a vast vault, bespangled overhead with luminous points like the starred firmament. It was also lighted by a yellow glow that seemed to proceed from a mighty sea or lake that occupied the centre of the chamber. Around this subterranean sea dusky figures flitted, bearing ladles filled with the yellow fluid, which they had replenished from its depths. From this lake diverging streams of the same mysterious flood penetrated like mighty rivers the cavernous distance. As they walked by the banks of this glittering Styx, Father José perceived how the liquid stream at certain places became solid. The ground was strewn with glittering flakes. One of these the Padre picked up and curiously examined. It was virgin gold.

An expression of discomfiture overcast the good Father's face at this discovery; but there was trace neither of malice nor satisfaction in the stranger's air, which was still of serious and fateful contemplation. When Father José recovered his equanimity, he said, bitterly—

"This, then, Sir Devil, is your work! This is your deceitful lure for the weak souls of sinful nations! So would you replace the Christian grace of Holy Spain!"

"This is what must be," returned the stranger gloomily.

"But listen, Sir Priest. It lies with you to avert the issue for a time. Leave me here in peace. Go back to Castile, and take with you your bells, your images, and your missions. Continue here, and you only precipitate results. Stay! promise me you will do this, and you shall not lack that which will render your old age an ornament and a blessing;" and the stranger motioned significantly to the lake.

It was here, the legend discreetly relates, that the Devil showed—as he always shows sooner or later—his cloven hoof. The worthy Padre, sorely perplexed by this threefold vision, and, if the truth must be told, a little nettled at this wresting away of the glory of holy Spanish discovery, had shown some hesitation. But the unlucky bribe of the Enemy of Souls touched his Castilian spirit. Starting back in deep disgust, he brandished his crucifix in the face of the unmasked Fiend, and in a voice that made the dusky vault resound cried—

"Avaunt thee, Sathanas! Diabolus, I defy thee! What! wouldst thou bribe me,—me, a brother of the Sacred Society of the Holy Jesus, Licentiate of Cordova and Inquisitor of Guadalaxara? Thinkest thou to buy me with thy sordid treasure? Avaunt!"

What might have been the issue of this rupture, and how complete might have been the triumph of the holy Father over the Archfiend, who was recoiling aghast at these sacred titles and the flourishing symbol, we can never know, for at that moment the crucifix slipped through his fingers.

Scarcely had it touched the ground before Devil and holy Father simultaneously cast themselves toward it. In the struggle they clinched, and the pious José, who was as much the superior of his antagonist in bodily as in spiritual strength, was about to treat the Great Adversary to a back somersault, when he suddenly felt the long nails of the

stranger piercing his flesh. A new fear seized his heart, a numbling chillness crept through his body, and he struggled to free himself, but in vain. A strange roaring was in his ears; the lake and cavern danced before his eyes and vanished, and with a loud cry he sank senseless to the ground.

When he recovered his consciousness, he was aware of a gentle swaying motion of his body. He opened his eyes, and saw it was high noon, and that he was being carried in a litter through the valley. He felt stiff, and looking down, perceived that his arm was tightly bandaged to his side.

He closed his eyes and after a few words of thankful prayer, thought how miraculously he had been preserved, and made a vow of candlesticks to the blessed Saint José. He then called in a faint voice, and presently the penitent Ignacio stood beside him.

The joy the poor fellow felt at his patron's returning consciousness for some time choked his utterance. He could only ejaculate, "A miracle! Blessed Saint José, he lives!" and kiss the Padre's bandaged hand. Father José, more intent on his last night's experience, waited for his emotion to subside, and asked where he had been found.

"On the mountain, your Reverence, but a few *varas* from where he attacked you."

"How?—you saw him then?" asked the Padre in unfeigned astonishment.

"Saw him, your Reverence! Mother of God! I should think I did! And your Reverence shall see him too, if he ever comes again within range of Ignacio's arquebuse."

"What mean you, Ignacio?" said the Padre, sitting bolt-upright in his litter.

"Why, the bear, your Reverence, — the bear, holy Father, who attacked your worshipful person while you were meditating on the top of yonder mountain."

"Ah!" said the holy Father, lying down again. "Chut, child! I would be at peace."

When he reached the Mission he was tenderly cared for, and in a few weeks was enabled to resume those duties from which, as will be seen, not even the machinations of the Evil One could divert him. The news of his physical disaster spread over the country, and a letter to the Bishop of Guadalajara contained a confidential and detailed account of the good Father's spiritual temptation. But in some way the story leaked out; and long after José was gathered to his fathers, his mysterious encounter formed the theme of thrilling and whispered narrative. The mountain was generally shunned. It is true that Señor Joaquín Pedrillo afterward located a grant near the base of the mountain; but as Señora Pedrillo was known to be a termagant half-breed, the Señor was not supposed to be over-fastidious.

Such is the legend of Monte del Diablo. As I said before, it may seem to lack essential corroboration. The discrepancy between the Father's narrative and the actual climax has given rise to some scepticism on the part of ingenious quibblers. All such I would simply refer to that part of the report of Señor Julio Serro, Sub-Prefect of San Pablo, before whom attest of the above was made. Touching this matter, the worthy Prefect observes, "That although the body of Father José doth show evidence of grievous conflict in the flesh, yet that is no proof that the Enemy of Souls, who could assume the figure of a decorous elderly *caballero*, could not at the same time transform himself into a bear for his own vile purposes."

## The Right Eye of the Commander.

THE year of grace 1797 passed away on the coast of California in a south-westerly gale. The little bay of San Carlos, albeit sheltered by the headlands of the Blessed Trinity, was rough and turbulent ; its foam clung quivering to the seaward wall of the Mission garden ; the air was filled with flying sand and spume, and as the Señor Comandante, Hermenegildo Salvatierra, looked from the deep embrasured window of the Presidio guardroom, he felt the salt breath of the distant sea buffet a colour into his smoke-dried cheeks.

The Commander, I have said, was gazing thoughtfully from the window of the guardroom. He may have been reviewing the events of the year now about to pass away. But, like the garrison at the Presidio, there was little to review. The year, like its predecessors, had been uneventful, —the days had slipped by in a delicious monotony of simple duties, unbroken by incident or interruption. The regularly recurring feasts and saints' days, the half-yearly courier from San Diego, the rare transport-ship and rarer foreign vessel, were the mere details of his patriarchal life. If there was no achievement, there was certainly no failure. Abundant harvests and patient industry amply supplied the wants of Presidio and Mission. Isolated from the family of nations, the wars which shook the world concerned them not so much as the last earthquake ; the struggle that

emancipated their sister colonies on the other side of the continent to them had no suggestiveness. In short, it was that glorious Indian summer of Californian history around which so much poetical haze still lingers,—that bland, indolent autumn of Spanish rule, so soon to be followed by the wintry storms of Mexican independence and the reviving spring of American conquest.

The Commander turned from the window and walked toward the fire that burned brightly on the deep oven-like hearth. A pile of copybooks, the work of the Presidio school, lay on the table. As he turned over the leaves with a paternal interest, and surveyed the fair round Scripture text,—the first pious pothooks of the pupils of San Carlos, an audible commentary fell from his lips: “‘Abimelech took her from Abraham’—ah, little one, excellent!—‘Jacob sent to see his brother’—body of Christ! that up-stroke of thine, Paquita, is marvellous; the Governor shall see it!” A film of honest pride dimmed the Commander’s left eye,—the right, alas! twenty years before had been sealed by an Indian arrow. He rubbed it softly with the sleeve of his leather jacket and continued: “‘The Ishmaelites having arrived’”——

He stopped, for there was a step in the courtyard, a foot upon the threshold, and a stranger entered. With the instinct of an old soldier, the Commander, after one glance at the intruder, turned quickly toward the wall, where his trusty Toledo hung, or should have been hanging. But it was not there, and as he recalled that the last time he had seen that weapon it was being ridden up and down the gallery by Pepito, the infant son of Bautista, the tortilio maker, he blushed and then contented himself with frowning upon the intruder.

But the stranger’s air, though irreverent, was decidedly peaceful. He was unarmed, and wore the ordinary cape of

carpauling and sea-boots of a mariner. Except a villanous smell of codfish, there was little about him that was peculiar.

His name, as he informed the Commander in Spanish that was more fluent than elegant or precise,—his name was Peleg Scudder. He was master of the schooner "General Court," of the port of Salem, in Massachusetts, on a trading voyage to the South Seas, but now driven by stress of weather into the bay of San Carlos. He begged permission to ride out the gale under the headlands of the Blessed Trinity, and no more. Water he did not need, having taken in a supply at Bodega. He knew the strict surveillance of the Spanish port regulations in regard to foreign vessels, and would do nothing against the severe discipline and good order of the settlement. There was a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone as he glanced toward the desolate parade-ground of the Presidio and the open unguarded gate. The fact was that the sentry, Felipe Gomez, had discreetly retired to shelter at the beginning of the storm, and was then sound asleep in the corridor.

The Commander hesitated. The port regulations were severe, but he was accustomed to exercise individual authority, and beyond an old order issued ten years before, regarding the American ship "Columbia," there was no precedent to guide him. The storm was severe, and a sentiment of humanity urged him to grant the stranger's request. It is but just to the Commander to say that his inability to enforce a refusal did not weigh with his decision. He would have denied with equal disregard of consequences that right to a seventy-four gun ship which he now yielded so gracefully to this Yankee trading schooner. He stipulated only that there should be no communication between the ship and shore. "For yourself, Señor Captain," he continued, "accept my hospitality. The fort is yours as

long as you shall grace it with your distinguished presence," and with old-fashioned courtesy he made the semblance of withdrawing from the guardroom.

Master Peleg Scudder smiled as he thought of the half-dismantled fort, the two mouldy brass cannon, cast in Manilla a century previous, and the shiftless garrison. A wild thought of accepting the Commander's offer literally, conceived in the reckless spirit of a man who never let slip an offer for trade, for a moment filled his brain, but a timely reflection of the commercial unimportance of the transaction checked him. He only took a capacious quid of tobacco, as the Commander gravely drew a settle before the fire, and in honour of his guest untied the black silk handkerchief that bound his grizzled brows.

What passed between Salvatierra and his guest that night it becomes me not, as a grave chronicler of the salient points of history, to relate. I have said that Master Peleg Scudder was a fluent talker, and under the influence of divers strong waters, furnished by his host, he became still more loquacious. And think of a man with a twenty years' budget of gossip! The Commander learned, for the first time, how Great Britain lost her colonies; of the French Revolution; of the great Napoleon, whose achievements, perhaps, Peleg coloured more highly than the Commander's superiors would have liked. And when Peleg turned questioner, the Commander was at his mercy. He gradually made himself master of the gossip of the Mission and Presidio, the "small-beer" chronicles of that pastoral age, the conversion of the heathen, the Presidio schools, and even asked the Commander how he had lost his eye! It is said that at this point of the conversation Master Peleg produced from about his person divers small trinkets, kickshaws and new-fangled trifles, and even forced some of them upon his host. It is further alleged that under the malign influence of Peleg and

several glasses of aguardiente, the Commander lost somewhat of his decorum, and behaved in a manner unseemly for one in his position, reciting high-flown Spanish poetry, and even piping in a thin high voice divers madrigals and heathen canzonets of an amorous complexion, chiefly in regard to a "little one" who was his, the Commander's, "soul!" These allegations, perhaps unworthy the notice of a serious chronicler, should be received with great caution, and are introduced here as simple hearsay. That the Commander, however, took a handkerchief and attempted to show his guest the mysteries of the *sembi cuacua*, capering in an agile but indecorous manner about the apartment, has been denied. Enough for the purposes of this narrative, that at midnight Peleg assisted his host to bed with many protestations of undying friendship, and then, as the gale had abated, took his leave of the Presidio and hurried aboard the "General Court." When the day broke the ship was gone.

I know not if Peleg kept his word with his host. It is said that the holy Fathers at the Mission that night heard a loud chanting in the plaza, as of the heathens singing psalms through their noses; that for many days after an odour of salt codfish prevailed in the settlement; that a dozen hard nutmegs, which were unfit for spice or seed, were found in the possession of the wife of the baker, and that several bushels of shoe-pegs, which bore a pleasing resemblance to oats, but were quite inadequate to the purposes of provender, were discovered in the stable of the blacksmith. But when the reader reflects upon the sacredness of a Yankee trader's word, the stringent discipline of the Spanish port regulations, and the proverbial indisposition of my countrymen to impose upon the confidence of a simple people, he will at once reject this part of the story.

A roll of drums, ushering in the year 1798, awoke the

Commander. The sun was shining brightly, and the storm had ceased. He sat up in bed, and through the force of habit rubbed his left eye. As the remembrance of the previous night came back to him, he jumped from his couch and ran to the window. There was no ship in the bay. A sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he rubbed both of his eyes. Not content with this, he consulted the metallic mirror which hung beside his crucifix. There was no mistake; the Commander had a visible second eye,—a right one,—as good, save for the purposes of vision, as the left.

Whatever might have been the true secret of this transformation, but one opinion prevailed at San Carlos. It was one of those rare miracles vouchsafed a pious Catholic community as an evidence to the heathen, through the intercession of the blessed San Carlos himself. That their beloved Commander, the temporal defender of the Faith, should be the recipient of this miraculous manifestation was most fit and seemly. The Commander himself was reticent; he could not tell a falsehood,—he dared not tell the truth. After all, if the good folk of San Carlos believed that the powers of his right eye were actually restored, was it wise and discreet for him to undeceive them? For the first time in his life the Commander thought of policy,—for the first time he quoted that text which has been the lure of so many well-meaning but easy Christians, of being “all things to all men.” Infeliz Hermenegildo Salvatierra!

For by degrees an ominous whisper crept through the little settlement. The right eye of the Commander, although miraculous, seemed to exercise a baleful effect upon the beholder. No one could look at it without winking. It was cold, hard, relentless, and unflinching. More than that, it seemed to be endowed with a dreadful prescience,—a faculty of seeing through and into the

inarticulate thoughts of those it looked upon. The soldiers of the garrison obeyed the eye rather than the voice of their Commander, and answered his glance rather than his lips in questioning. The servants could not evade the ever-watchful but cold attention that seemed to pursue them. The children of the Presidio school smirched their copybooks under the awful supervision, and poor Paquita, the prize pupil, failed utterly in that marvellous up-stroke when her patron stood beside her. Gradually distrust, suspicion, self-accusation, and timidity took the place of trust, confidence, and security throughout San Carlos. Wherever the right eye of the Commander fell, a shadow fell with it.

Nor was Salvatierra entirely free from the baleful influence of his miraculous acquisition. Unconscious of its effect upon others, he only saw in their actions evidence of certain things that the crafty Peleg had hinted on that eventful New Year's eve. His most trusty retainers stammered, blushed, and faltered before him. Self-accusations, confessions of minor faults and delinquencies, or extravagant excuses and apologies met his mildest inquiries. The very children that he loved—his pet pupil, Paquita—seemed to be conscious of some hidden sin. The result of this constant irritation showed itself more plainly. For the first half-year the Commander's voice and eye were at variance. He was still kind, tender, and thoughtful in speech. Gradually, however, his voice took upon itself the hardness of his glance and its sceptical, impassive quality, and as the year again neared its close it was plain that the Commander had fitted himself to the eye, and not the eye to the Commander.

It may be surmised that these changes did not escape the watchful solicitude of the Fathers. Indeed, the few who were first to ascribe the right eye of Salvatierra to

miraculous origin and the special grace of the blessed San Carlos, now talked openly of witchcraft and the agency of Luzbel, the evil one. It would have fared ill with Hermenegildo Salvatierra had he been aught but Commander or amenable to local authority. But the reverend Father, Friar Manuel de Cortes, had no power over the political executive, and all attempts at spiritual advice failed signally. He retired baffled and confused from his first interview with the Commander, who seemed now to take a grim satisfaction in the fateful power of his glance. The holy Father contradicted himself, exposed the fallacies of his own arguments, and even, it is asserted, committed himself to several undoubted heresies. When the Commander stood up at mass, if the officiating priest caught that sceptical and searching eye, the service was inevitably ruined. Even the power of the Holy Church seemed to be lost, and the last hold upon the affections of the people and the good order of the settlement departed from San Carlos.

As the long dry summer passed, the low hills that surrounded the white walls of the Presidio grew more and more to resemble in hue the leathern jacket of the Commander, and Nature herself seemed to have borrowed his dry, hard glare. The earth was cracked and seamed with drought; a blight had fallen upon the orchards and vineyards, and the rain, long delayed and ardently prayed for, came not. The sky was as tearless as the right eye of the Commander. Murmurs of discontent, insubordination, and plotting among the Indians reached his ear; he only set his teeth the more firmly, tightened the knot of his black silk handkerchief, and looked up his Toledo.

The last day of the year 1798 found the Commander sitting, at the hour of evening prayers, alone in the guard-room. He no longer attended the services of the Holy Church, but crept away at such times to some solitary spot,

where he spent the interval in silent meditation. The fire-light played upon the low beams and rafters, but left the bowed figure of Salvatierra in darkness. Sitting thus, he felt a small hand touch his arm, and, looking down, saw the figure of Paquita, his little Indian pupil, at his knee. "Ah ! littlest of all," said the Commander, with something of his old tenderness, lingering over the endearing diminutives of his native speech,—“sweet one, what doest thou here ? Art thou not afraid of him whom every one shuns and fears?”

“No,” said the little Indian readily, “not in the dark. I hear your voice,—the old voice ; I feel your touch,—the old touch ; but I see not your eye, Señor Commandante. That only I fear,—and that, O Señor, O my father,” said the child, lifting her little arms towards his,—“that I know is not thine own !”

The Commander shuddered and turned away. Then, recovering himself, he kissed Paquita gravely on the forehead and bade her retire. A few hours later, when silence had fallen upon the Presidio, he sought his own couch and slept peacefully.

At about the middle watch of the night a dusky figure crept through the low embrasure of the Commander's apartment. Other figures were flitting through the parade-ground, which the Commander might have seen had he not slept so quietly. The intruder stepped noiselessly to the couch and listened to the sleeper's deep-drawn inspiration. Something glittered in the firelight as the savage lifted his arm ; another moment and the sore perplexities of Hermenegildo Salvatierra would have been over, when suddenly the savage started and fell back in a paroxysm of terror. The Commander slept peacefully, but his right eye, widely opened, fixed and unaltered, glared coldly on the would-be assassin. The man fell to the earth in a fit, and the noise awoke the sleeper.

To rise to his feet, grasp his sword, and deal blows thick and fast upon the mutinous savages who now thronged the room, was the work of a moment. Help opportunely arrived, and the undisciplined Indians were speedily driven beyond the walls ; but in the scuffle the Commander received a blow upon his right eye, and, lifting his hand to that mysterious organ, it was gone. Never again was it found, and never again, for bale or bliss, did it adorn the right orbit of the Commander.

With it passed away the spell that had fallen upon San Carlos. The rain returned to invigorate the languid soil, harmony was restored between priest and soldier, the green grass presently waved over the sere hillsides, the children flocked again to the side of their martial preceptor, a *Te Deum* was sung in the Mission church, and pastoral content once more smiled upon the gentle valleys of San Carlos. And far southward crept the "General Court" with its master, Peleg Scudder, trafficking in beads and peltries with the Indians, and offering glass eyes, wooden legs, and other Boston notions to the chiefs.

## The Legend of Devil's Point.

ON the northerly shore of San Francisco Bay, at a point where the Golden Gate broadens into the Pacific, stands a bluff promontory. It affords shelter from the prevailing winds to a semicircular bay on the east. Around this bay the hillside is bleak and barren, but there are traces of former habitation in a weather-beaten cabin and deserted corral. It is said that these were originally built by an enterprising squatter, who for some unaccountable reason abandoned them shortly after. The "Jumper" who succeeded him disappeared one day quite as mysteriously. The third tenant, who seemed to be a man of sanguine, hopeful temperament, divided the property into building lots, staked off the hillside, and projected the map of a new metropolis. Failing, however, to convince the citizens of San Francisco that they had mistaken the site of their city, he presently fell into dissipation and despondency. He was frequently observed haunting the narrow strip of beach at low tide or perched upon the cliff at high water. In the latter position a sheep-tender one day found him, cold and pulseless, with a map of his property in his hand, and his face turned toward the distant sea.

Perhaps these circumstances gave the locality its infelicitous reputation. Vague rumours were bruited of a supernatural influence that had been exercised on the tenants. Strange stories were circulated of the origin of

the diabolical title by which the promontory was known. By some it was believed to be haunted by the spirit of one of Sir Francis Drake's sailors who had deserted his ship in consequence of stories told by the Indians of gold discoveries, but who had perished by starvation on the rocks. A vaquero who had once passed a night in the ruined cabin related how a strangely dressed and emaciated figure had knocked at the door at midnight and demanded food. Other story-tellers, of more historical accuracy, roundly asserted that Sir Francis himself had been little better than a pirate, and had chosen this spot to conceal quantities of ill-gotten booty taken from neutral bottoms, and had protected his hiding-place by the orthodox means of hellish incantation and diabolic agencies. On moonlight nights a shadowy ship was sometimes seen standing off-and-on, or when fogs encompassed sea and shore, the noise of oars rising and falling in their rowlocks could be heard muffled and indistinctly during the night. Whatever foundation there might have been for these stories, it was certain that a more weird and desolate-looking spot could not have been selected for their theatre. High hills, verdureless and enfiladed with dark cañadas, cast their gaunt shadows on the tide. During a greater portion of the day the wind, which blew furiously and incessantly, seemed possessed with a spirit of fierce disquiet and unrest. Toward night-fall the sea-fog crept with soft step through the portals of the Golden Gate, or stole in noiseless marches down the hillside, tenderly soothing the wind-buffeted face of the cliff, until sea and sky were hid together. At such times the populous city beyond and the nearer settlement seemed removed to an infinite distance. An immeasurable loneliness settled upon the cliff. The creaking of a windlass, or the monotonous chant of sailors on some unseen, outlying ship, came faint and far, and full of mystic suggestion.

About a year ago a well-to-do middle-aged broker of San Francisco found himself at nightfall the sole occupant of a "plunger," encompassed in a dense fog, and drifting toward the Golden Gate. This unexpected termination of an afternoon's sail was partly attributable to his want of nautical skill, and partly to the effect of his usually sanguine nature. Having given up the guidance of his boat to the wind and tide, he had trusted too implicitly for that reaction which his business experience assured him was certain to occur in all affairs, aquatic as well as terrestrial. "The tide will turn soon," said the broker confidently, "or something will happen." He had scarcely settled himself back again in the stern-sheets, before the bow of the plunger, obeying some mysterious impulse, veered slowly around and a dark object loomed up before him. A gentle eddy carried the boat farther in shore, until at last it was completely embayed under the lee of a rocky point now faintly discernible through the fog. He looked around him in the vain hope of recognising some familiar headland. The tops of the high hills which rose on either side were hidden in the fog. As the boat swung around, he succeeded in fastening a line to the rocks, and sat down again with a feeling of renewed confidence and security.

It was very cold. The insidious fog penetrated his tightly buttoned coat, and set his teeth to chattering in spite of the aid he sometimes drew from a pocket-flask. His clothes were wet and the stern-sheets were covered with spray. The comforts of fire and shelter continually rose before his fancy as he gazed wistfully on the rocks. In sheer despair he finally drew the boat toward the most accessible part of the cliff and essayed to ascend. This was less difficult than it appeared, and in a few moments he had gained the hill above. A dark object at a little distance attracted his attention, and on approaching, it

proved to be a deserted cabin. The story goes on to say, that having built a roaring fire of stakes pulled from the adjoining corral, with the aid of a flask of excellent brandy, he managed to pass the early part of the evening with comparative comfort.

There was no door in the cabin, and the windows were simply square openings, which freely admitted the searching fog. But in spite of these discomforts,—being a man of cheerful, sanguine temperament,—he amused himself by poking the fire and watching the ruddy glow which the flames threw on the fog from the open door. In this innocent occupation a great weariness overcame him, and he fell asleep.

He was awakened at midnight by a loud “halloo,” which seemed to proceed directly from the sea. Thinking it might be the cry of some boatman lost in the fog, he walked to the edge of the cliff, but the thick veil that covered sea and land rendered all objects at the distance of a few feet indistinguishable. He heard, however, the regular strokes of oars rising and falling on the water. The halloo was repeated. He was clearing his throat to reply, when to his surprise an answer came apparently from the very cabin he had quitted. Hastily retracing his steps, he was the more amazed, on reaching the open door, to find a stranger warming himself by the fire. Stepping back far enough to conceal his own person, he took a good look at the intruder.

He was a man of about forty, with a cadaverous face. But the oddity of his dress attracted the broker's attention more than his lugubrious physiognomy. His legs were hid in enormously wide trousers descending to his knee, where they met long boots of sealskin. A pea-jacket with exaggerated cuffs, almost as large as the breeches, covered his chest, and around his waist a monstrous belt, with a

buckle like a dentist's sign, supported two trumpet-mouthed pistols and a curved hanger. He wore a long queue, which depended half-way down his back. As the firelight fell on his ingenuous countenance the broker observed with some concern that this queue was formed entirely of a kind of tobacco known as pigtail or twist. Its effect, the broker remarked, was much heightened when in a moment of thoughtful abstraction the apparition bit off a portion of it and rolled it as a quid into the cavernous recesses of his jaws.

Meanwhile, the nearer splash of oars indicated the approach of the unseen boat. The broker had barely time to conceal himself behind the cabin before a number of uncouth-looking figures clambered up the hill towards the ruined rendezvous. They were dressed like the previous comer, who, as they passed through the open door exchanged greetings with each in antique phraseology, bestowing at the same time some familiar nickname. Flash-in-the-Pan, Spitter-of-Frogs, Malmsey Butt, Latheyard-Will, and Mark-the-Pinker, were the few sobriquets the broker remembered. Whether these titles were given to express some peculiarity of their owner he could not tell, for a silence followed as they slowly ranged themselves upon the floor of the cabin in a semicircle around their cadaverous host.

At length Malmsey Butt, a spherical-bodied man-of-war's-man, with a rubicund nose, got on his legs somewhat unsteadily, and addressed himself to the company. They had met that evening, said the speaker, in accordance with a time-honoured custom. This was simply to relieve that one of their number who for fifty years had kept watch and ward over the locality where certain treasures had been buried. At this point the broker pricked up his ears. "If so be, camarados and brothers all," he continued, "ye are ready to receive the report of our excellent and well-beloved

brother, Master Slit-the-Weazand, touching his search for this treasure, why, marry, to't and begin."

A murmur of assent went around the circle as the speaker resumed his seat. Master Slit-the-Weazand slowly opened his lantern jaws and began. He had spent much of his time in determining the exact location of the treasure. He believed—nay, he could state positively—that its position was now settled. It was true he had done some trifling little business outside. Modesty forbade his mentioning the particulars, but he would simply state that of the three tenants who had occupied the cabin during the past ten years, none were now alive. [Applause, and cries of "Go to! thou wast always a tall fellow!" and the like.]

Mark-the-Pinker next arose. Before proceeding to business he had a duty to perform in the sacred name of friendship. It ill became him to pass a eulogy upon the qualities of the speaker who had preceded him, for he had known him from "boyhood's hour." Side by side they had wrought together in the Spanish war. For a neat hand with a toledo he challenged his equal, while how nobly and beautifully he had won his present title of Slit-the-Weazand all could testify. The speaker, with some show of emotion, asked to be pardoned if he dwelt too freely on passages of their early companionship; he then detailed, with a fine touch of humour, his comrade's peculiar manner of slitting the ears and lips of a refractory Jew who had been captured in one of their previous voyages. He would not weary the patience of his hearers, but would briefly propose that the report of Slit-the-Weazand be accepted, and that the thanks of the company be tendered him.

A beaker of strong spirits was then rolled into the hut, and cans of grog were circulated freely from hand to hand. The health of Slit-the-Weazand was proposed in a neat speech by Mark-the-Pinker, and responded to by the former

gentleman in a manner that drew tears to the eyes of all present. To the broker, in his concealment, this momentary diversion from the real business of the meeting occasioned much anxiety. As yet nothing had been said to indicate the exact locality of the treasure to which they had mysteriously alluded. Fear restrained him from open inquiry, and curiosity kept him from making good his escape during the orgie which followed.

But his situation was beginning to become critical. Flash-in-the-Pan, who seemed to have been a man of choleric humour, taking fire during some hotly-contested argument, discharged both his pistols at the breast of his opponent. The balls passed through on each side immediately below his arm-pits, making a clean hole, through which the horrified broker could see the firelight behind him. The wounded man, without betraying any concern, excited the laughter of the company by jocosely putting his arms akimbo, and inserting his thumbs into the orifices of the wounds as if they had been arm-holes. This having in a measure restored good-humour, the party joined hands and formed a circle preparatory to dancing. The dance was commenced by some monotonous stanzas hummed in a very high key by one of the party, the rest joining in the following chorus, which seemed to present a familiar sound to the broker's ear :

“ Her Majesty is very sicke,  
Lord Essex hath ye measles,  
Our Admiral hath licked ye French—  
Poppe ! saith ye weasel ! ”

At the regular recurrence of the last line, the party discharged their loaded pistols in all directions, rendering the position of the unhappy broker one of extreme peril and perplexity.

When the tumult had partially subsided, Flash-in-the-Pan called the meeting to order, and most of the revellers

returned to their places, Malmsey Butt, however, insisting upon another chorus, and singing at the top of his voice :

“ I am ycleped J. Keyser—I was born at Spring, hys Garden,  
My father toe make me ane clerke erst did essaye,  
But a fico for ye offis—I spurn ye losels offeire ;  
For I fain would be ane butcher by'r ladykin alwaye.”

Flash-in-the-Pan drew a pistol from his belt, and bidding some one gag Malmsey Butt with the stock of it, proceeded to read from a portentous roll of parchment that he held in his hand. It was a semi-legal document, clothed in the quaint phraseology of a bygone period. After a long preamble, asserting their loyalty as lieges of her most bountiful Majesty and Sovereign Lady the Queen, the document declared that they then and there took possession of the promontory, and all the treasure-trove therein contained, formerly buried by Her Majesty's most faithful and devoted Admiral Sir Francis Drake, with the right to search, discover, and appropriate the same ; and for the purpose thereof they did then and there form a guild or corporation to so discover, search for, and disclose said treasures, and by virtue thereof they solemnly subscribed their names. But at this moment the reading of the parchment was arrested by an exclamation from the assembly, and the broker was seen frantically struggling at the door in the strong arms of Mark-the-Pinker.

“ Let me go ! ” he cried, as he made a desperate attempt to reach the side of Master Flash-in-the-Pan. “ Let me go ! I tell you, gentlemen, that document is not worth the parchment it is written on. The laws of the State, the customs of the country, the mining ordinances, are all against it. Don't, by all that's sacred, throw away such a capital investment through ignorance and informality. Let me go ! I assure you, gentlemen, professionally, that you have a big thing,—a remarkably big thing, and even if I

ain't in it, I'm not going to see it fall through. Don't, for God's sake, gentlemen, I implore you, put your names to such a ridiculous paper. There isn't a notary "——

He ceased. The figures around him, which were beginning to grow fainter and more indistinct as he went on, swam before his eyes, flickered, reappeared again, and finally went out. He rubbed his eyes and gazed around him. The cabin was deserted. On the hearth the red embers of his fire were fading away in the bright beams of the morning sun, that looked aslant through the open window. He ran out to the cliff. The sturdy sea-breeze fanned his feverish cheeks and tossed the white caps of waves that beat in pleasant music on the beach below. A stately merchantman with snowy canvas was entering the Gate. The voices of sailors came cheerfully from a bark at anchor below the point. The muskets of the sentries gleamed brightly on Alcatraz, and the rolling of drums swelled on the breeze. Farther on, the hills of San Francisco, cottage-crowned and bordered with wharves and warehouses, met his longing eye.

Such is the legend of Devil's Point. Any objections to its reliability may be met with the statement that the broker who tells the story has since incorporated a company under the title of "Flash-in-the-Pan Gold and Silver Treasure Mining Company," and that its shares are already held at a stiff figure. A copy of the original document is said to be on record in the office of the company, and on any clear day the locality of the claim may be distinctly seen from the hills of San Francisco.

## The Adventure of Padre Vicentio.

A LEGEND OF SAN FRANCISCO.

ONE pleasant New Year's Eve, about forty years ago, Padre Vicentio was slowly picking his way across the sandhills from the Mission Dolores. As he climbed the crest of the ridge beside Mission Creek, his broad, shining face might have been easily mistaken for the beneficent image of the rising moon, so bland was its smile and so indefinite its features. For the Padre was a man of notable reputation and character; his ministration at the Mission of San José had been marked with cordiality and unction; he was adored by the simple-minded savages, and had succeeded in impressing his individuality so strongly upon them, that the very children were said to have miraculously resembled him in feature.

As the holy man reached the loneliest portion of the road, he naturally put spurs to his mule as if to quicken that decorous pace which the obedient animal had acquired through long experience of its master's habits. The locality had an unfavourable reputation. Sailors—deserters from whaleships—had been seen lurking about the outskirts of the town, and low scrub oaks which everywhere beset the trail might have easily concealed some desperate runaway. Besides these material obstructions, the Devil, whose hostility to the Church was well known, was said to sometimes haunt the vicinity in the likeness of a spectral whaler, who had

met his death in a drunken bout from a harpoon in the hands of a companion. The ghost of this unfortunate mariner was frequently observed sitting on the hill toward the dusk of evening, armed with his favourite weapon and a tub containing a coil of line, looking out for some belated traveller on whom to exercise his professional skill. It is related that the good Father José Maria of the Mission Dolores had been twice attacked by this phantom sportsman; that once, on returning from San Francisco, and panting with exertion from climbing the hill, he was startled by a stentorian cry of "There she blows!" quickly followed by a hurtling harpoon, which buried itself in the sand beside him; that on another occasion he narrowly escaped destruction, his serapa having been transfixcd by the diabolical harpoon and dragged away in triumph. Popular opinion seems to have been divided as to the reason for the devil's particular attention to Father José, some asserting that the extreme piety of the Padre excited the Evil One's animosity, and others that his adipose tendency simply rendered him, from a professional view-point, a profitable capture.

Had Father Vicentio been inclined to scoff at this apparition as a heretical innovation, there was still the story of Concepcion, the Demon Vaquero, whose terrible *riata* was fully as potent as the whaler's harpoon. Concepcion, when in the flesh, had been a celebrated herder of cattle and wild horses, and was reported to have chased the Devil in the shape of a fleet *pinto* colt all the way from San Luis Obispo to San Francisco, vowing not to give up the chase until he had overtaken the disguised Arch-Enemy. This the Devil prevented by resuming his own shape, but kept the unfortunate vaquero to the fulfilment of his rash vow; and Concepcion still scoured the coast on a phantom steed, beguiling the monotony of his eternal pursuit by lassoing travellers, dragging them at the heels

of his unbroken mustang until they were eventually picked up, half-strangled, by the roadside. The Padre listened attentively for the tramp of this terrible rider. But no footfall broke the stillness of the night ; even the hoofs of his own mule sank noiselessly in the shifting sand. Now and then a rabbit bounded lightly by him, or a quail ran into the bushes. The melancholy call of plover from the adjoining marshes of Mission Creek came to him so faintly and fitfully that it seemed almost a recollection of the past rather than a reality of the present.

To add to his discomposure, one of those heavy sea-fogs peculiar to the locality began to drift across the hills and presently encompassed him. While endeavouring to evade its cold embraces, Padre Vicentio incautiously drove his heavy spurs into the flanks of his mule as that puzzled animal was hesitating on the brink of a steep declivity. Whether the poor beast was indignant at this novel outrage, or had been for some time reflecting on the evils of being priest-ridden, has not transpired ; enough that he suddenly threw up his heels, pitching the reverend man over his head, and, having accomplished this feat, coolly dropped on his knees and tumbled after his rider.

Over and over went the Padre, closely followed by his faithless mule. Luckily the little hollow which received the pair was of sand, that yielded to the superincumbent weight, half burying them without further injury. For some moments the poor man lay motionless, vainly endeavouring to collect his scattered senses. A hand irreverently laid upon his collar and a rough shake assisted to recall his consciousness. As the Padre staggered to his feet he found himself confronted by a stranger.

Seen dimly through the fog, and under circumstances that to say the least were not prepossessing, the newcomer had an inexpressibly mysterious and brigand-like aspect.

A long boat-cloak concealed his figure, and a slouched hat hid his features, permitting only his eyes to glisten in the depths. With a deep groan the Padre slipped from the stranger's grasp and subsided into the soft sand again.

"Gad's life!" said the stranger, pettishly, "hast no more bones in thy fat carcase than a jellyfish? Lend a hand, here! Yo, heave ho!" and he dragged the Padre into an upright position. "Now, then, who and what art thou?"

The Padre could not help thinking that the question might have more properly been asked by himself; but with an odd mixture of dignity and trepidation he began enumerating his different titles, which were by no means brief, and would have been alone sufficient to strike awe in the bosom of an ordinary adversary. The stranger irreverently broke in upon his formal phrases, and assuring him that a priest was the very person he was looking for, coolly replaced the old man's hat, which had tumbled off, and bade him accompany him at once on an errand of spiritual counsel to one who was even then lying in extremity. "To think," said the stranger, "that I should stumble upon the very man I was seeking! Body of Bacchus! but this is lucky! Follow me quickly, for there is no time to lose."

Like most easy natures, the positive assertion of the stranger, and withal a certain authoritative air of command, overcame what slight objections the Padre might have feebly nurtured during this remarkable interview. The spiritual invitation was one, also, that he dared not refuse; not only that, but it tended somewhat to remove the superstitious dread with which he had begun to regard the mysterious stranger. But, following at a respectful distance, the Padre could not help observing with a thrill of horror that the stranger's footsteps made no impression on the sand, and his figure seemed at times to blend and incor-

porate itself with the fog, until the holy man was obliged to wait for its reappearance. In one of these intervals of embarrassment he heard the ringing of the far-off Mission bell proclaiming the hour of midnight. Scarcely had the last stroke died away before the announcement was taken up and repeated by a multitude of bells of all sizes, and the air was filled with the sound of striking clocks and the pealing of steeple chimes. The old man uttered a cry of alarm. The stranger sharply demanded the cause. "The bells ! did you not hear them ?" gasped Padre Vicentio. "Tush ! tush !" answered the stranger, "thy fall hath set triple bob-majors ringing in thine ears. Come on !"

The Padre was only too glad to accept the explanation conveyed in this discourteous answer. But he was destined for another singular experience. When they had reached the summit of the eminence now known as Russian Hill, an exclamation again burst from the Padre. The stranger turned to his companion with an impatient gesture, but the Padre heeded him not. The view that burst upon his sight was such as might well have engrossed the attention of a more enthusiastic temperament. The fog had not yet reached the hill, and the long valleys and hillsides of the embarcadero below were glittering with the light of a populous city. "Look !" said the Padre, stretching his hand over the spreading landscape. "Look ! dost thou not see the stately squares and brilliantly lighted avenues of a mighty metropolis ? Dost thou not see, as it were, another firmament below ?"

"Avast heaving, reverend man, and quit this folly," said the stranger, dragging the bewildered Padre after him. "Behold rather the stars knocked out of thy hollow noddle by the fall thou hast had. Prithee, get over thy visions and rhapsodies, for the time is wearing apace."

The Padre humbly followed without another word. De-

scending the hill toward the north, the stranger leading the way, in a few moments the Padre detected the wash of waves, and presently his feet struck the firmer sand of the beach. Here the stranger paused, and the Padre perceived a boat lying in readiness hard by. As he stepped into the stern-sheets, in obedience to the command of his companion, he noticed that the rowers seemed to partake of the misty incorporeal texture of his companion, a similarity that became the more distressing when he perceived also that their oars in pulling together made no noise. The stranger, assuming the helm, guided the boat on quietly, while the fog, settling over the face of the water and closing around them, seemed to interpose a muffled wall between themselves and the rude jarring of the outer world. As they pushed further into this penetralia, the Padre listened anxiously for the sound of creaking blocks and the rattling of cordage, but no vibration broke the veiled stillness or disturbed the warm breath of the fleecy fog. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of their mysterious journey. A one-eyed rower, who sat in front of the Padre, catching the devout Father's eye, immediately grinned such a ghastly smile, and winked his remaining eye with such diabolical intensity of meaning, that the Padre was constrained to utter a pious ejaculation, which had the disastrous effect of causing the marine Cocles to "catch a crab," throwing his heels in the air and his head into the bottom of the boat. But even this accident did not disturb the gravity of the rest of the ghastly boat's crew.

When, as it seemed to the Padre, ten minutes had elapsed, the outline of a large ship loomed up directly across their bow. Before he could utter the cry of warning that rose to his lips, or brace himself against the expected shock, the boat passed gently and noiselessly through the sides of the vessel, and the holy man found himself standing on the

berth-deck of what seemed to be an ancient caravel. The boat and boat's crew had vanished. Only his mysterious friend, the stranger, remained. By the light of a swinging lamp the Padre beheld him standing beside a hammock, whereon, apparently, lay the dying man to whom he had been so mysteriously summoned. As the Padre, in obedience to a sign from his companion, stepped to the side of the sufferer, he feebly opened his eyes and thus addressed him :—

“Thou seest before thee, reverend Father, a helpless mortal, struggling not only with the last agonies of the flesh, but beaten down and tossed with sore anguish of the spirit. It matters little when or how I became what thou now seest me. Enough that my life has been ungodly and sinful, and that my only hope of absolution lies in my imparting to thee a secret which is of vast importance to the Holy Church, and affects greatly her power, wealth, and dominion on these shores. But the terms of this secret and the conditions of my absolution are peculiar. I have but five minutes to live. In that time I must receive the extreme unction of the Church.”

“And thy secret?” said the holy Father.

“Shall be told afterwards,” answered the dying man.

“Come, my time is short. Shrive me quickly.”

The Padre hesitated. “Couldst thou not tell this secret first?”

“Impossible!” said the dying man, with what seemed to the Padre a momentary gleam of triumph. Then, as his breath grew feebler, he called impatiently, “Shrive me! shrive me!”

“Let me know at least what this secret concerns?” suggested the Padre insinuatingly.

“Shrive me first,” said the dying man.

But the priest still hesitated, parleying with the sufferer

until the ship's bell struck, when, with a triumphant mocking laugh from the stranger, the vessel suddenly fell to pieces, amid the rushing of waters which at once involved the dying man, the priest, and the mysterious stranger.

The Padre did not recover his consciousness until high noon the next day, when he found himself lying in a little hollow between the Mission Hills, and his faithful mule a few paces from him, cropping the sparse herbage. The Padre made the best of his way home, but wisely abstained from narrating the facts mentioned above until after the discovery of gold, when the whole of this veracious incident was related, with the assertion of the Padre that the secret which was thus mysteriously snatched from his possession was nothing more than the discovery of gold, years since, by the runaway sailors from the expedition of Sir Francis Drake.

## The Devil and the Broker.

A MEDIÆVAL LEGEND.

THE church clocks in San Francisco were striking ten. The Devil, who had been flying over the city that evening, just then alighted on the roof of a church near the corner of Bush and Montgomery Streets. It will be perceived that the popular belief that the Devil avoids holy edifices, and vanishes at the sound of a *Credo* or *Paternoster*, is long since exploded. Indeed, modern scepticism asserts that he is not averse to these orthodox discourses, which particularly bear reference to himself, and in a measure recognise his power and importance.

I am inclined to think, however, that his choice of a resting-place was a good deal influenced by its contiguity to a populous thoroughfare. When he was comfortably seated, he began pulling out the joints of a small rod which he held in his hand, and which presently proved to be an extraordinary fishing-pole, with a telescopic adjustment that permitted its protraction to a marvellous extent. Affixing a line thereto, he selected a fly of a particular pattern from a small box which he carried with him, and, making a skilful cast, threw his line into the very centre of that living stream which ebbed and flowed through Montgomery Street.

Either the people were very virtuous that evening or the bait was not a taking one. In vain the Devil whipped the

stream at an eddy in front of the Occidental, or trolled his line into the shadows of the Cosmopolitan; five minutes passed without even a nibble. "Dear me!" quoth the Devil, "that's very singular; one of my most popular flies, too! Why, they'd have risen by shoals in Broadway or Beacon Street for that. Well, here goes another." And fitting a new fly from his well-filled box, he gracefully recast his line.

For a few moments there was every prospect of sport. The line was continually bobbing and the nibbles were distinct and gratifying. Once or twice the bait was apparently gorged and carried off to the upper storeys of the hotels to be digested at leisure. At such times the professional manner in which the Devil played out his line would have thrilled the heart of Izaak Walton. But his efforts were unsuccessful; the bait was invariably carried off without hooking the victim, and the Devil finally lost his temper. "I've heard of these San Franciscans before," he muttered; "wait till I get hold of one, that's all!" he added malevolently, as he rebaited his hook. A sharp tug and a wriggle followed his next trial, and finally, with considerable effort, he landed a portly two-hundred-pound broker upon the church roof.

As the victim lay there gasping, it was evident that the Devil was in no hurry to remove the hook from his gills; nor did he exhibit in this delicate operation that courtesy of manner and graceful manipulation which usually distinguished him.

"Come," he said gruffly, as he grasped the broker by the waistband, "quit that whining and grunting. Don't flatter yourself that you're a prize either. I was certain to have had you. It was only a question of time."

"It is not that, my lord, which troubles me," whined the unfortunate wretch, as he painfully wriggled his head, "but

that I should have been fooled by such a paltry bait. What will they say of me down there? To have let 'bigger things' go by, and to be taken in by this cheap trick," he added, as he groaned and glanced at the fly which the Devil was carefully rearranging, "is what,—pardon me, my lord,—is what gets me!"

"Yes," said the Devil philosophically, "I never caught anybody yet who didn't say that; but tell me, ain't you getting somewhat fastidious down there? Here is one of my most popular flies, the greenback," he continued, exhibiting an emerald-looking insect, which he drew from his box. "This, so generally considered excellent in election season, has not even been nibbled at. Perhaps your sagacity, which, in spite of this unfortunate contretemps, no one can doubt," added the Devil, with a graceful return to his usual courtesy, "may explain the reason or suggest a substitute."

The broker glanced at the contents of the box with a supercilious smile. "Too old-fashioned, my lord,—long ago played out. Yet," he added, with a gleam of interest, "for a consideration I might offer something—ahem!—that would make a taking substitute for these trifles. Give me," he continued, in a brisk, business-like way, "a slight percentage and a bonus down, and I'm your man."

"Name your terms," said the Devil earnestly.

"My liberty and a percentage on all you take, and the thing's done."

The Devil caressed his tail thoughtfully for a few moments. He was certain of the broker any way, and the risk was slight. "Done!" he said.

"Stay a moment," said the artful broker. "There are certain contingencies. Give me your fishing-rod and let me apply the bait myself. It requires a skilful hand, my lord; even your well-known experience might fail. Leave

me alone for half an hour, and if you have reason to complain of my success I will forfeit my deposit,—I mean my liberty.”

The Devil acceded to his request, bowed, and withdrew. Alighting gracefully in Montgomery Street, he dropped into Meade & Co.’s clothing store, where, having completely equipped himself *à la mode*, he sallied forth intent on his personal enjoyment. Determining to sink his professional character, he mingled with the current of human life, and enjoyed, with that immense capacity for excitement peculiar to his nature, the whirl, bustle, and feverishness of the people, as a purely æsthetic gratification unalloyed by the cares of business. What he did that evening does not belong to our story. We return to the broker, whom we left on the roof.

When he made sure that the Devil had retired, he carefully drew from his pocket-book a slip of paper and affixed it on the hook. The line had scarcely reached the current before he felt a bite. The hook was swallowed. To bring up his victim rapidly, disengage him from the hook and reset his line, was the work of a moment. Another bite and the same result. Another, and another. In a very few minutes the roof was covered with his panting spoil. The broker could himself distinguish that many of them were personal friends; nay, some of them were familiar frequenters of the building on which they were now miserably stranded. That the broker felt a certain satisfaction in being instrumental in thus misleading his fellow-brokers no one acquainted with human nature will for a moment doubt. But a stronger pull on his line caused him to put forth all his strength and skill. The magic pole bent like a coach-whip. The broker held firm, assisted by the battlements of the church. Again and again it was almost wrested from his hand, and again and again he slowly

reeled in a portion of the tightening line. At last, with one mighty effort, he lifted to the level of the roof a struggling object. A howl like Pandemonium rang through the air as the broker successfully landed at his feet—the Devil himself!

The two glared fiercely at each other. The broker, perhaps mindful of his former treatment, evinced no haste to remove the hook from his antagonist's jaw. When it was finally accomplished, he asked quietly if the Devil was satisfied. That gentleman seemed absorbed in the contemplation of the bait which he had just taken from his mouth. "I am," he said finally, "and forgive you; but what do you call this?"

"Bend low," replied the broker, as he buttoned up his coat ready to depart. The Devil inclined his ear. "I call it WILD CAT!"

## The Ogress of Silver Land ;

OR,

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF PRINCE BADFELLAH AND  
PRINCE BULLEBOYE.

IN the second year of the reign of the renowned Caliph Lo there dwelt in SILVER LAND, adjoining his territory, a certain terrible Ogress. She lived in the bowels of a dismal mountain, where she was in the habit of confining such unfortunate travellers as ventured within her domain. The country for miles around was sterile and barren. In some places it was covered with a white powder, which was called in the language of the country AL KA LI, and was supposed to be the pulverised bones of those who had perished miserably in her service.

In spite of this, every year great numbers of young men devoted themselves to the service of the Ogress, hoping to become her godsons, and to enjoy the good fortune which belonged to that privileged class. For these godsons had no work to perform, neither at the mountain nor elsewhere, but roamed about the world with credentials of their relationship in their pockets, which they called STOKH, which was stamped with the stamp and sealed with the seal of the Ogress, and which enabled them at the end of each moon to draw large quantities of gold and silver from her treasury. And the wisest and most favoured of those godsons were the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE.

They knew all the secrets of the Ogress, and how to wheedle and coax her. They were also the favourites of SOOPAH INTENDENT, who was her Lord High Chamberlain and Prime Minister, and who dwelt in SILVER LAND.

One day, SOOPAH INTENDENT said to his servants, "What is that which travels the most surely, the most secretly, and the most swiftly?"

And they all answered as one man, "LIGHTNING, my lord, travels the most surely, the most swiftly, and the most secretly!"

Then said SOOPAH INTENDENT, "Let Lightning carry this message secretly, swiftly, and surely to my beloved friends the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE, and tell them that their godmother is dying, and bid them seek some other godmother or sell their STOKH ere it becomes *badjee*,—worthless."

"Bekhesm! On our heads be it!" answered the servants; and they ran to Lightning with the message, who flew with it to the City by the Sea, and delivered it, even at that moment, into the hands of the Princes BADFELLAH and BULLEBOYE.

Now the Prince BADFELLAH was a wicked young man; and when he had received this message he tore his beard and rent his garment and reviled his godmother and his friend SOOPAH INTENDENT. But presently he arose, and dressed himself in his finest stuffs, and went forth into the bazaars and among the merchants, capering and dancing as he walked, and crying in a loud voice, "O happy day! O day worthy to be marked with a white stone!"

This he said cunningly, thinking the merchants and men of the bazaars would gather about him, which they presently did, and began to question him: "What news, O most worthy and serene Highness? Tell us, that we may make merry too!"

Then replied the cunning prince, "Good news, O my brothers, for I have heard this day that my godmother in SILVER LAND is well." The merchants, who were not aware of the substance of the real message, envied him greatly, and said one to another, "Surely our brother the Prince BADFELLAH is favoured by Allah above all men ;" and they were about to retire, when the prince checked them, saying, "Tarry for a moment. Here are my credentials or STOKH. The same I will sell you for fifty thousand sequins, for I have to give a feast to-day, and need much gold. Who will give fifty thousand?" And he again fell to capering and dancing. But this time the merchants drew a little apart, and some of the oldest and wisest said, "What dirt is this which the prince would have us swallow? If his godmother were well, why should he sell his STOKH? Bismillah! The olives are old and the jar is broken!" When Prince BADFELLAH perceived them whispering, his countenance fell, and his knees smote against each other through fear; but, dissembling again, he said, "Well, so be it! Lo! I have much more than shall abide with me, for my days are many and my wants are few. Say forty thousand sequins for my STOKH and let me depart, in Allah's name. Who will give forty thousand sequins to become the godson of such a healthy mother?" And he again fell to capering and dancing, but not as gaily as before, for his heart was troubled. The merchants, however, only moved farther away. "Thirty thousand sequins," cried Prince BADFELLAH; but even as he spoke they fled before his face, crying, "His godmother is dead. Lo! the jackals are defiling her grave. Mashallah! he has no godmother." And they sought out PANIK, the swift-footed messenger, and bade him shout through the bazaars that the godmother of Prince BADFELLAH was dead. When he heard this, the prince fell upon his face, and rent his

garments, and covered himself with the dust of the market-place. As he was sitting thus, a porter passed him with jars of wine on his shoulders, and the prince begged him to give him a jar, for he was exceeding thirsty and faint. But the porter said, "What will my lord give me first?" And the prince, in very bitterness of spirit, said, "Take this," and handed him his STOKH, and so exchanged it for a jar of wine.

Now the Prince BULLEBOYE was of a different disposition. When he received the message of SOOPAH INTENDENT he bowed his head, and said, "It is the will of God." Then he rose, and without speaking a word entered the gates of his palace. But his wife, the peerless MAREE JAHANN, perceiving the gravity of his countenance, said, "Why is my lord cast down and silent? Why are those rare and priceless pearls, his words, shut up so tightly between those gorgeous oyster-shells, his lips?" But to this he made no reply. Thinking further to divert him, she brought her lute into the chamber and stood before him, and sang the song and danced the dance of BEN KOTTON, which is called IBRAHIM'S DAUGHTER, but she could not lift the veil of sadness from his brow.

When she had ceased, the Prince BULLEBOYE arose and said, "Allah is great, and what am I, his servant, but the dust of the earth! Lo! this day has my godmother sickened unto death, and my STOKH become as a withered palm-leaf. Call hither my servants and camel-drivers, and the merchants that have furnished me with stuffs, and the beggars who have feasted at my table, and bid them take all that is here, for it is mine no longer!" With these words he buried his face in his mantle and wept aloud.

But MAREE JAHANN, his wife, plucked him by the sleeve. "Prithee, my lord," said she, "bethink thee of the BROKAH or scrivener who besought thee but yesterday to share thy

STOKH with him and gave thee his bond for fifty thousand sequins." But the noble Prince BULLEBOYE, raising his head, said, "Shall I sell to him for fifty thousand sequins that which I know is not worth a SOO MARKEE? For is not all the BROKAH's wealth, even his wife and children, pledged on that bond? Shall I ruin him to save myself? Allah forbid! Rather let me eat the salt fish of honest penury than the kabobs of dishonourable affluence; rather let me wallow in the mire of virtuous oblivion than repose on the divan of luxurious wickedness."

When the prince had given utterance to this beautiful and edifying sentiment, a strain of gentle music was heard, and the rear wall of the apartment, which had been ingeniously constructed like a flat, opened and discovered the Ogress of SILVER LAND in the glare of blue fire, seated on a triumphal car attached to two ropes which were connected with the flies, in the very act of blessing the unconscious prince. When the walls closed again without attracting his attention, Prince BULLEBOYE arose, dressed himself in his coarsest and cheapest stuffs, and sprinkled ashes on his head, and in this guise, having embraced his wife, went forth into the bazaars. In this it will be perceived how differently the good Prince BULLEBOYE acted from the wicked Prince BADFELLAH, who put on his gayest garments to simulate and deceive.

Now when Prince BULLEBOYE entered the chief bazaar, where the merchants of the city were gathered in council, he stood up in his accustomed place, and all that were there held their breath, for the noble Prince BULLEBOYE was much respected. "Let the BROKAH whose bond I hold for fifty thousand sequins stand forth!" said the prince. And the BROKAH stood forth from among the merchants. Then said the prince, "Here is thy bond for fifty thousand sequins, for which I was to deliver unto thee one half of

my STOKH. Know, then, O my brother,—and thou, too, O Aga of the BROKAHS,—that this my STOKH which I pledged to thee is worthless. For my godmother, the Ogress of SILVER LAND, is dying. Thus do I release thee from thy bond, and from the poverty which might overtake thee, as it has even me, thy brother, the Prince BULLEBOYE.” And with that the noble Prince BULLEBOYE tore the bond of the BROKAH into pieces and scattered it to the four winds.

Now when the prince tore up the bond there was a great commotion, and some said, “Surely the Prince BULLEBOYE is drunken with wine ;” and others, “He is possessed of an evil spirit ;” and his friends expostulated with him, saying, “What thou hast done is not the custom of the bazaars,—behold, it is not Biz !” But to all the prince answered gravely, “It is right ; on my own head be it !”

But the oldest and wisest of the merchants, they who had talked with Prince BADFELLAH the same morning, whispered together, and gathered round the BROKAH whose bond the Prince BULLEBOYE had torn up. “Hark ye,” said they, “our brother the Prince BULLEBOYE is cunning as a jackal. What bosh is this about ruining himself to save thee ? Such a thing was never heard before in the bazaars. It is a trick, O thou mooncalf of a BROKAH ! Dost thou not see that he has heard good news from his godmother, the same that was even now told us by the Prince BADFELLAH, his confederate, and that he would destroy thy bond for fifty thousand sequins because his STOKH is worth a hundred thousand ! Be not deceived, O too credulous BROKAH ! for this that our brother the prince doeth is not in the name of ALLAH, but of Biz, the only god known in the bazaars of the city.”

When the foolish BROKAH heard these things he cried, “Justice, O Aga of the BROKAHS,—justice and the fulfil-

ment of my bond ! Let the prince deliver unto me the STOKH. Here are my fifty thousand sequins." But the prince said, "Have I not told thee that my godmother is dying, and that my STOKH is valueless?" At this the BROKAH only clamoured the more for justice and the fulfilment of his bond. Then the Aga of the BROKAHS said, "Since the bond is destroyed, behold thou hast no claim. Go thy ways !" But the BROKAH again cried, "Justice, my lord Aga ! Behold, I offer the prince seventy thousand sequins for his STOKH !" But the prince said, "It is not worth one sequin !" Then the Aga said, "Bismillah ! I cannot understand this. Whether thy godmother be dead, or dying, or immortal, does not seem to signify. Therefore, O prince, by the laws of BIZ and of ALLAH, thou art released. Give the BROKAH thy STOKH for seventy thousand sequins, and bid him depart in peace. On his own head be it !" When the prince heard this command, he handed the STOKH to the BROKAH, who counted out to him seventy thousand sequins. But the heart of the virtuous prince did not rejoice, nor did the BROKAH when he found his STOKH was valueless ; but the merchants lifted their hands in wonder at the sagacity and wisdom of the famous Prince BULLEBOYE. For none would believe that it was the law of ALLAH that the prince followed, and not the rules of BIZ.

## The Christmas Gift that Came to Rupert.

A STORY FOR LITTLE SOLDIERS.

IT was the Christmas season in California—a season of falling rain and springing grasses. There were intervals when, through driving clouds and flying scud, the sun visited the haggard hills with a miracle, and death and resurrection were as one, and out of the very throes of decay a joyous life struggled outward and upward. Even the storms that swept down the dead leaves nurtured the tender buds that took their places. There were no episodes of snowy silence; over the quickening fields the farmer's ploughshare hard followed the furrows left by the latest rains. Perhaps it was for this reason that the Christmas evergreens which decorated the drawing-room took upon themselves a foreign aspect, and offered a weird contrast to the roses, seen dimly through the windows, as the southwest wind beat their soft faces against the panes.

"Now," said the Doctor, drawing his chair closer to the fire, and looking mildly but firmly at the semicircle of flaxen heads around him, "I want it distinctly understood before I begin my story, that I am not to be interrupted by any ridiculous questions. At the first one I shall stop. At the second, I shall feel it my duty to administer a dose of castor-oil all round. The boy that moves his legs or

arms will be understood to invite amputation. I have brought my instruments with me, and never allow pleasure to interfere with my business. Do you promise?"

"Yes, sir," said six small voices simultaneously. The volley was, however, followed by half-a-dozen dropping questions.

"Silence! Bob, put your feet down, and stop rattling that sword. Flora shall sit by my side, like a little lady, and be an example to the rest. Fung Tang shall stay, too, if he likes. Now, turn down the gas a little; there, that will do—just enough to make the fire look brighter, and to show off the Christmas candles. Silence, everybody! The boy who cracks an almond, or breathes too loud, over his raisins, will be put out of the room."

There was a profound silence. Bob laid his sword tenderly aside and nursed his leg thoughtfully. Flora, after coquettishly adjusting the pockets of her little apron, put her arm upon the Doctor's shoulder, and permitted herself to be drawn beside him. Fung Tang, the little heathen page, who was permitted, on this rare occasion, to share the Christmas revels in the drawing-room, surveyed the group with a smile that was at once sweet and philosophical. The light ticking of a French clock on the mantel, supported by a young shepherdess of bronze complexion and great symmetry of limb, was the only sound that disturbed the Christmas-like peace of the apartment—a peace which held the odours of evergreens, new toys, cedar boxes, glue, and varnish in a harmonious combination that passed all understanding.

"About four years ago at this time," began the Doctor, "I attended a course of lectures in a certain city. One of the professors, who was a sociable, kindly man—though somewhat practical and hard-headed—invited me to his house on Christmas-night. I was very glad to go, as I was

anxious to see one of his sons, who, though only twelve years old, was said to be very clever. I dare not tell you how many Latin verses this little fellow could recite, or how many English ones he had composed. In the first place, you'd want me to repeat them ; secondly, I'm not a judge of poetry—Latin or English. But there were judges who said they were wonderful for a boy, and everybody predicted a splendid future for him. Everybody but his father. He shook his head doubtfully whenever it was mentioned, for, as I have told you, he was a practical, matter-of-fact man.

“There was a pleasant party at the Professor's that night. All the children of the neighbourhood were there, and among them the Professor's clever son, Rupert, as they called him—a thin little chap, about as tall as Bobby there, and fair and delicate as Flora by my side. His health was feeble, his father said ; he seldom ran about and played with other boys—preferring to stay at home and brood over his books, and compose what he called his verses.

“Well, we had a Christmas-tree just like this, and we had been laughing and talking, calling the names of the children who had presents on the tree, and everybody was very happy and joyous, when one of the children suddenly uttered a cry of mingled surprise and hilarity, and said, ‘Here's something for Rupert—and what do you think it is?’

“We all guessed. ‘A desk ;’ ‘A copy of Milton ;’ ‘A gold pen ;’ ‘A rhyming dictionary.’ ‘No ? what then?’

“‘A drum !’

“‘A what?’ asked everybody.

“‘A drum ! with Rupert's name on it.’

“Sure enough there it was. A good-sized, bright, new, brass-bound drum, with a slip of paper on it, with the inscription, ‘For RUPERT.’

"Of course we all laughed, and thought it a good joke. 'You see you're to make a noise in the world, Rupert!'" said one. 'Here's parchment for the poet,' said another. 'Rupert's last work in sheepskin covers,' said a third. 'Give us a classical tune, Rupert,' said a fourth, and so on. But Rupert seemed too mortified to speak; he changed colour, bit his lips, and finally burst into a passionate fit of crying and left the room. Then those who had joked him felt ashamed, and everybody began to ask who had put the drum there. But no one knew, or, if they did, the unexpected sympathy awakened for the sensitive boy kept them silent. Even the servants were called up and questioned, but no one could give any idea where it came from. And what was still more singular, everybody declared that up to the moment it was produced, no one had seen it hanging on the tree. What do I think? Well, I have my own opinion. But no questions! Enough for you to know that Rupert did not come downstairs again that night, and the party soon after broke up.

"I had almost forgotten those things, for the War of the Rebellion broke out the next spring, and I was appointed surgeon in one of the new regiments, and was on my way to the seat of war. But I had to pass through the city where the Professor lived, and there I met him. My first question was about Rupert. The Professor shook his head sadly. 'He's not so well,' he said; 'he has been declining since last Christmas when you saw him. A very strange case,' he added, giving it a long Latin name, 'a very singular case. But go and see him yourself,' he urged; 'it may distract his mind and do him good.'

"I went accordingly to the Professor's house, and found Rupert lying on a sofa propped up with pillows. Around him were scattered his books, and, what seemed in singular contrast, that drum I told you about was hanging on a nail

just above his head. His face was thin and wasted ; there was a red spot on either cheek, and his eyes were very bright and widely opened. He was glad to see me, and when I told him where I was going, he asked a thousand questions about the war. I thought I had thoroughly diverted his mind from its sick and languid fancies, when he suddenly grasped my hand and drew me towards him.

“ ‘Doctor,’ said he, in a low whisper, ‘you won’t laugh at me if I tell you something?’ ”

“ ‘No, certainly not,’ I said.

“ ‘You remember that drum?’ he said, pointing to the glittering toy that hung against the wall. ‘You know, too, how it came to me. A few weeks after Christmas, I was lying half-asleep here, and the drum was hanging on the wall, when suddenly I heard it beaten ; at first low and slowly, then faster and louder, until its rolling filled the house. In the middle of the night I heard it again. I did not dare to tell anybody about it, but I have heard it every night ever since.’ ”

“He paused and looked anxiously in my face. ‘Sometimes,’ he continued, ‘it is played softly, sometimes loudly, but always quickening to a long roll, so loud and alarming, that I have looked to see people coming into my room to ask what was the matter. But I think, Doctor—I think,’ he repeated slowly, looking up with painful interest into my face, ‘that no one hears it but myself.’ ”

“ ‘I thought so, too, but I asked him if he had heard it at any other time.

“ ‘Once or twice in the daytime,’ he replied, ‘when I have been reading or writing ; then very loudly, as though it were angry, and tried in that way to attract my attention away from my books.’ ”

“ ‘I looked into his face and placed my hand upon his pulse. His eyes were very bright and his pulse a little

hurried and quick. I then tried to explain to him that he was very weak, and that his senses were very acute, as most weak people's are; and how that when he read, or grew interested and excited, or when he was tired at night, the throbbing of a big artery made the beating sound he heard. He listened to me with a sad smile of unbelief, but thanked me, and in a little while I went away. But as I was going downstairs I met the Professor. I gave him my opinion of the case—well, no matter what it was.

“‘He wants fresh air and exercise,’ said the Professor, ‘and some practical experience of life, sir.’ The Professor was not a bad man, but he was a little worried and impatient, and thought—as clever people are apt to think—that things which he didn't understand were either silly or improper.

“I left the city that very day, and in the excitement of battlefields and hospitals I forgot all about little Rupert, nor did I hear of him again, until one day, meeting an old classmate in the army, who had known the Professor, he told me that Rupert had become quite insane, and that in one of his paroxysms he had escaped from the house, and as he had never been found, it was feared that he had fallen into the river and was drowned. I was terribly shocked for the moment, as you may imagine; but, dear me, I was living just then among scenes as terrible and shocking, and I had little time to spare to mourn over poor Rupert.

“It was not long after receiving this intelligence that we had a terrible battle, in which a portion of our army was slaughtered. I was detached from my brigade to ride over to the battlefield and assist the surgeons of the beaten division, who had more on their hands than they could attend to. When I reached the barn that served for a temporary hospital, I went at once to work. Ah! Bob,” said the Doctor thoughtfully, taking the bright sword from the

hands of the half-frightened Bob, and holding it gravely before him, "these pretty playthings are symbols of cruel, ugly realities."

"I turned to a tall, stout Vermonter," he continued, very slowly, tracing a pattern on the rug with the point of the scabbard, "who was badly wounded in both thighs, but he held up his hands and begged me to help others first who needed it more than he. I did not at first heed his request, for this kind of unselfishness was very common in the army; but he went on, 'For God's sake, Doctor, leave me here; there is a drummer-boy of our regiment—a mere child—dying, if he isn't dead now. Go and see him first. He lies over there. He saved more than one life. He was at his post in the panic of this morning, and saved the honour of the regiment.' I was so much more impressed by the man's manner than by the substance of his speech, which was, however, corroborated by the other poor fellows stretched around me, that I passed over to where the drummer lay, with his drum beside him. I gave one glance at his face—and—yes, Bob—yes, my children—it *was* Rupert.

"Well! well! it needed not the chalked cross which my brother surgeons had left upon the rough board whereon he lay to show how urgent was the relief he sought; it needed not the prophetic words of the Vermonter, nor the damp that mingled with the brown curls that clung to his pale forehead, to show how hopeless it was now. I called him by name. He opened his eyes—larger, I thought, in the new vision that was beginning to dawn upon him—and recognised me. He whispered, 'I'm glad you are come, but I don't think you can do me any good.'

"I could not tell him a lie. I could not say anything. I only pressed his hand in mine as he went on.

"'But you will see father, and ask him to forgive me.

Nobody is to blame but myself. It was a long time before I understood why the drum came to me that Christmas night, and why it kept calling to me every night, and what it said. I know it now. The work is done, and I am content. Tell father it is better as it is. I should have lived only to worry and perplex him, and something in me tells me this is right.'

"He lay still for a moment, and then grasping my hand, said—

" 'Hark !'

"I listened, but heard nothing but the suppressed moans of the wounded men around me. 'The drum,' he said faintly ; 'don't you hear it?—the drum is calling me.'

"He reached out his arm to where it lay, as though he would embrace it.

" 'Listen'—he went on—'it's the reveille. There are the ranks drawn up in review. Don't you see the sunlight flash down the long line of bayonets? Their faces are shining—they present arms—there comes the General—but his face I cannot look at for the glory round his head. He sees me ; he smiles, it is——' and with a name upon his lips that he had learned long ago, he stretched himself wearily upon the planks and lay quite still.

"That's all.

"No questions now—never mind what became of the drum.

"Who's that snivelling ?

"Bless my soul ! where's my pill-box?"



*TALES OF THE ARGONAUTS.*



## The Iliad of Sandy Bar.

BEFORE nine o'clock it was pretty well known all along the river that the two parties of the "Amity Claim" had quarrelled and separated at daybreak. At that time the attention of their nearest neighbour had been attracted by the sounds of altercations and two consecutive pistol-shots. Running out, he had seen dimly in the grey mist that rose from the river the tall form of Scott, one of the partners, descending the hill toward the cañon; a moment later, York, the other partner, had appeared from the cabin, and walked in an opposite direction toward the river, passing within a few feet of the curious watcher. Later it was discovered that a serious Chinaman, cutting wood before the cabin, had witnessed part of the quarrel. But John was stolid, indifferent, and reticent. "Me choppee wood, me no fightee," was his serene response to all anxious queries. "But what did they *say*, John?" John did not *sabe*. Colonel Starbottle deftly ran over the various popular epithets which a generous public sentiment might accept as reasonable provocation for an assault. But John did not recognise them. "And this yer's the cattle," said the Colonel, with some severity, "that some thinks oughter be allowed to testify ag'n a White Man! Git—you heathen!"

Still the quarrel remained inexplicable. That two men, whose amiability and grave tact had earned for them the title of "The Peacemakers," in a community not greatly

given to the passive virtues,—that these men, singularly devoted to each other, should suddenly and violently quarrel, might well excite the curiosity of the camp. A few of the more inquisitive visited the late scene of conflict, now deserted by its former occupants. There was no trace of disorder or confusion in the neat cabin. The rude table was arranged as if for breakfast; the pan of yellow biscuit still sat upon that hearth whose dead embers might have typified the evil passions that had raged there but an hour before. But Colonel Starbottle's eye—albeit somewhat bloodshot and rheumy—was more intent on practical details. On examination, a bullet-hole was found in the doorpost, and another nearly opposite in the casing of the window. The Colonel called attention to the fact that the one "agreed with" the bore of Scott's revolver, and the other with that of York's derringer. "They must hev stood about yer," said the Colonel, taking position; "not mor'n three feet apart, and—missed!" There was a fine touch of pathos in the falling inflection of the Colonel's voice, which was not without effect. A delicate perception of wasted opportunity thrilled his auditors.

But the Bar was destined to experience a greater disappointment. The two antagonists had not met since the quarrel, and it was vaguely rumoured that, on the occasion of a second meeting, each had determined to kill the other "on sight." There was, consequently, some excitement—and, it is to be feared, no little gratification—when, at ten o'clock, York stepped from the Magnolia Saloon into the one long straggling street of the camp, at the same moment that Scott left the blacksmith's shop at the forks of the road. It was evident, at a glance, that a meeting could only be avoided by the actual retreat of one or the other.

In an instant the doors and windows of the adjacent saloons were filled with faces. Heads unaccountably

appeared above the river banks and from behind boulders. An empty waggon at the cross-road was suddenly crowded with people, who seemed to have sprung from the earth. There was much running and confusion on the hillside. On the mountain-road, Mr. Jack Hamlin had reined up his horse and was standing upright on the seat of his buggy. And the two objects of this absorbing attention approached each other.

"York's got the sun," "Scott'll line him on that tree," "He's waiting to draw his fire," came from the cart; and then it was silent. But above this human breathlessness the river rushed and sang, and the wind rustled the tree-tops with an indifference that seemed obtrusive. Colonel Starbottle felt it, and in a moment of sublime preoccupation, without looking around, waved his cane behind him warningly to all Nature, and said, "Shu!"

The men were now within a few feet of each other. A hen ran across the road before one of them. A feathery seed vessel, wafted from a wayside tree, fell at the feet of the other. And, unheeding this irony of Nature, the two opponents came nearer, erect and rigid, looked in each other's eyes, and—passed!

Colonel Starbottle had to be lifted from the cart. "This yer camp is played out," he said gloomily, as he affected to be supported into the Magnolia. With what further expression he might have indicated his feelings it was impossible to say, for at that moment Scott joined the group. "Did you speak to me?" he asked of the Colonel, dropping his hand, as if with accidental familiarity, on that gentleman's shoulder. The Colonel, recognising some occult quality in the touch, and some unknown quantity in the glance of his questioner, contented himself by replying, "No, sir," with dignity. A few rods away, York's conduct was as characteristic and peculiar. "You had a mighty fine chance;

why didn't you plump him?" said Jack Hamlin, as York drew near the buggy. "Because I hate him," was the reply, heard only by Jack. Contrary to popular belief, this reply was not hissed between the lips of the speaker, but was said in an ordinary tone. But Jack Hamlin, who was an observer of mankind, noticed that the speaker's hands were cold and his lips dry, as he helped him into the buggy, and accepted the seeming paradox with a smile.

When Sandy Bar became convinced that the quarrel between York and Scott could not be settled after the usual local methods, it gave no further concern thereto. But presently it was rumoured that the "Amity Claim" was in litigation, and that its possession would be expensively disputed by each of the partners. As it was well known that the claim in question was "worked out" and worthless, and that the partners, whom it had already enriched, had talked of abandoning it but a day or two before the quarrel, this proceeding could only be accounted for as gratuitous spite. Later, two San Francisco lawyers made their appearance in this guileless Arcadia, and were eventually taken into the saloons, and—what was pretty much the same thing—the confidences of the inhabitants. The results of this unhallowed intimacy were many subpoenas; and, indeed, when the "Amity Claim" came to trial, all of Sandy Bar that was not in compulsory attendance at the county seat came there from curiosity. The gulches and ditches for miles around were deserted. I do not propose to describe that already famous trial. Enough that, in the language of the plaintiff's counsel, "it was one of no ordinary significance, involving the inherent rights of that untiring industry which had developed the Pactolian resources of this golden land;" and, in the homelier phrase of Colonel Starbottle, "A fuss that gentlemen might hev settled in ten minutes over a social glass, ef they meant business; or in ten seconds with

a revolver, ef they meant fun." Scott got a verdict, from which York instantly appealed. It was said that he had sworn to spend his last dollar in the struggle.

In this way Sandy Bar began to accept the enmity of the former partners as a lifelong feud, and the fact that they had ever been friends was forgotten. The few who expected to learn from the trial the origin of the quarrel were disappointed. Among the various conjectures, that which ascribed some occult feminine influence as the cause was naturally popular in a camp given to dubious compliment of the sex. "My word for it, gentlemen," said Colonel Starbottle, who had been known in Sacramento as a Gentleman of the Old School, "there's some lovely creature at the bottom of this." The gallant Colonel then proceeded to illustrate his theory by divers sprightly stories, such as Gentlemen of the Old School are in the habit of repeating, but which, from deference to the prejudices of gentlemen of a more recent school, I refrain from transcribing here. But it would appear that even the Colonel's theory was fallacious. The only woman who personally might have exercised any influence over the partners was the pretty daughter of "old man Folinsbee," of Poverty Flat, at whose hospitable house—which exhibited some comforts and refinements rare in that crude civilisation—both York and Scott were frequent visitors. Yet into this charming retreat York strode one evening a month after the quarrel, and, beholding Scott sitting there, turned to the fair hostess with the abrupt query, "Do you love this man?" The young woman thus addressed returned that answer—at once spirited and evasive—which would occur to most of my fair readers in such an exigency. Without another word, York left the house. "Miss Jo" heaved the least possible sigh as the door closed on York's curls and square shoulders, and then, like a good girl, turned to her insulted guest.

"But would you believe it, dear?" she afterwards related to an intimate friend, "the other creature, after glowering at me for a moment, got upon its hind legs, took its hat, and left too; and that's the last I've seen of either."

The same hard disregard of all other interests or feelings in the gratification of their blind rancour characterised all their actions. When York purchased the land below Scott's new claim, and obliged the latter, at a great expense, to make a long *détour* to carry a "tail-race" around it, Scott retaliated by building a dam that overflowed York's claim on the river. It was Scott who, in conjunction with Colonel Starbottle, first organised that active opposition to the Chinamen which resulted in the driving off of York's Mongolian labourers; it was York who built the waggon-road and established the express which rendered Scott's mules and pack-trains obsolete; it was Scott who called into life the Vigilance Committee which expatriated York's friend, Jack Hamlin; it was York who created the "Sandy Bar Herald," which characterised the act as "a lawless outrage" and Scott as a "Border Ruffian;" it was Scott, at the head of twenty masked men, who, one moonlight night, threw the offending "forms" into the yellow river, and scattered the types in the dusty road. These proceedings were received in the distant and more civilised outlying towns as vague indications of progress and vitality. I have before me a copy of the "Poverty Flat Pioneer" for the week ending August 12, 1856, in which the editor, under the head of "County Improvements," says: "The new Presbyterian Church on C Street, at Sandy Bar, is completed. It stands upon the lot formerly occupied by the Magnolia Saloon, which was so mysteriously burnt last month. The temple, which now rises like a Phoenix from the ashes of the Magnolia, is virtually the free gift of H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, who purchased the lot and donated the lumber. Other

buildings are going up in the vicinity, but the most noticeable is the 'Sunny South Saloon,' erected by Captain Mat. Scott, nearly opposite the church. Captain Scott has spared no expense in the furnishing of this saloon, which promises to be one of the most agreeable places of resort in old Tuolumne. He has recently imported two new first-class billiard-tables with cork cushions. Our old friend, 'Mountain Jimmy,' will dispense liquors at the bar. We refer our readers to the advertisement in another column. Visitors to Sandy Bar cannot do better than give 'Jimmy' a call." Among the local items occurred the following :—  
"H. J. York, Esq., of Sandy Bar, has offered a reward of \$100 for the detection of the parties who hauled away the steps of the new Presbyterian Church, C Street, Sandy Bar, during divine service on Sabbath evening last. Captain Scott adds another hundred for the capture of the miscreants who broke the magnificent plate-glass windows of the new saloon on the following evening. There is some talk of reorganising the old Vigilance Committee at Sandy Bar."

When, for many months of cloudless weather, the hard, unwinking sun of Sandy Bar had regularly gone down on the unpacified wrath of these men, there was some talk of mediation. In particular, the pastor of the church to which I have just referred—a sincere, fearless, but perhaps not fully enlightened man—seized gladly upon the occasion of York's liberality to attempt to reunite the former partners. He preached an earnest sermon on the abstract sinfulness of discord and rancour. But the excellent sermons of the Rev. Mr. Daws were directed to an ideal congregation that did not exist at Sandy Bar,—a congregation of beings of unmingled vices and virtues, of single impulses, and perfectly logical motives, of preternatural simplicity, of childlike faith, and grown-up responsibilities. As unfortunately the people who actually attended Mr. Daws'

church were mainly very human, somewhat artful, more self-excusing than self-accusing, rather good-natured, and decidedly weak, they quietly shed that portion of the sermon which referred to themselves, and accepting York and Scott—who were both in defiant attendance—as curious examples of those ideal beings above referred to, felt a certain satisfaction—which, I fear, was not altogether Christian-like—in their “raking-down.” If Mr. Daws expected York and Scott to shake hands after the sermon, he was disappointed. But he did not relax his purpose. With that quiet fearlessness and determination which had won for him the respect of men who were too apt to regard piety as synonymous with effeminacy, he attacked Scott in his own house. What he said has not been recorded, but it is to be feared that it was part of his sermon. When he had concluded, Scott looked at him, not unkindly, over the glasses of his bar, and said, less irreverently than the words might convey, “Young man, I rather like your style; but when you know York and me as well as you do God Almighty, it’ll be time to talk.”

And so the feud progressed; and so, as in more illustrious examples, the private and personal enmity of two representative men led gradually to the evolution of some crude, half-expressed principle or belief. It was not long before it was made evident that those beliefs were identical with certain broad principles laid down by the founders of the American Constitution, as expounded by the statesmanlike A., or were the fatal quicksands on which the ship of state might be wrecked, warningly pointed out by the eloquent B. The practical result of all which was the nomination of York and Scott to represent the opposite factions of Sandy Bar in legislative councils.

For some weeks past the voters of Sandy Bar and the adjacent camps had been called upon, in large type, to "RALLY!" In vain the great pines at the cross-roads—whose trunks were compelled to bear this and other legends—moaned and protested from their windy watch-towers. But one day, with fife and drum and flaming transparency, a procession filed into the triangular grove at the head of the gulch. The meeting was called to order by Colonel Starbottle, who, having once enjoyed legislative functions, and being vaguely known as "war-horse," was considered to be a valuable partisan of York. He concluded an appeal for his friend with an enunciation of principles, interspersed with one or two anecdotes so gratuitously coarse that the very pines might have been moved to pelt him with their cast-off cones as he stood there. But he created a laugh, on which his candidate rode into popular notice; and when York rose to speak, he was greeted with cheers. But, to the general astonishment, the new speaker at once launched into bitter denunciation of his rival. He not only dwelt upon Scott's deeds and example as known to Sandy Bar, but spoke of facts connected with his previous career hitherto unknown to his auditors. To great precision of epithet and directness of statement, the speaker added the fascination of revelation and exposure. The crowd cheered, yelled, and were delighted, but when this astounding philippic was concluded, there was a unanimous call for "Scott!" Colonel Starbottle would have resisted this manifest impropriety, but in vain. Partly from a crude sense of justice, partly from a meaner craving for excitement, the assemblage was inflexible; and Scott was dragged, pushed, and pulled upon the platform. As his frowsy head and unkempt beard appeared above the railing, it was evident that he was drunk. But it was also evident, before he opened his lips, that the orator of Sandy Bar—the one man

who could touch their vagabond sympathies (perhaps because he was not above appealing to them)—stood before them. A consciousness of this power lent a certain dignity to his figure, and I am not sure but that his very physical condition impressed them as a kind of regal unbending and large condescension. Howbeit, when this unexpected Hector arose from this ditch, York's myrmidons trembled. "There's naught, gentlemen," said Scott, leaning forward on the railing,—“there's naught as that man hez said as isn't true. I *was* run outer Cairo; I *did* belong to the Regulators; I *did* desert from the army; I *did* leave a wife in Kansas. But thar's one thing he didn't charge me with, and maybe he's forgotten. For three years, gentlemen, I was that man's pardner!” Whether he intended to say more, I cannot tell; a burst of applause artistically rounded and enforced the climax, and virtually elected the speaker. That Fall he went to Sacramento, York went abroad, and for the first time in many years distance and a new atmosphere isolated the old antagonists.

With little of change in the green wood, grey rock, and yellow river, but with much shifting of human landmarks and new faces in its habitations, three years passed over Sandy Bar. The two men, once so identified with its character, seemed to have been quite forgotten. “You will never return to Sandy Bar,” said Miss Folinsbee, the “Lily of Poverty Flat,” on meeting York in Paris, “for Sandy Bar is no more. They call it Riverside now; and the new town is built higher up on the river bank. By the by, ‘Jo’ says that Scott has won his suit about the ‘Amity Claim,’ and that he lives in the old cabin, and is drunk half his time. Oh, I beg your pardon,” added the lively lady, as a flush crossed York's sallow cheek; “but, bless me, I really thought that old grudge was made up. I'm sure it ought to be.”

It was three months after this conversation, and a pleasant summer evening, that the Poverty Flat coach drew up before the veranda of the Union Hotel at Sandy Bar. Among its passengers was one, apparently a stranger, in the local distinction of well-fitting clothes and closely shaven face, who demanded a private room and retired early to rest. But before sunrise next morning he arose, and, drawing some clothes from his carpet-bag, proceeded to array himself in a pair of white duck trousers, a white duck overshirt, and straw hat. When his toilet was completed, he tied a red bandana handkerchief in a loop and threw it loosely over his shoulders. The transformation was complete. As he crept softly down the stairs and stepped into the road, no one would have detected in him the elegant stranger of the previous night, and but few have recognised the face and figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar.

In the uncertain light of that early hour, and in the change that had come over the settlement, he had to pause for a moment to recall where he stood. The Sandy Bar of his recollection lay below him, nearer the river; the buildings around him were of later date and newer fashion. As he strode toward the river, he noticed here a schoolhouse and there a church. A little farther on, "The Sunny South" came in view, transformed into a restaurant, its gilding faded and its paint rubbed off. He now knew where he was; and running briskly down a declivity, crossed a ditch, and stood upon the lower boundary of the Amity Claim.

The grey mist was rising slowly from the river, clinging to the tree-tops and drifting up the mountain-side, until it was caught among these rocky altars, and held a sacrifice to the ascending sun. At his feet the earth, cruelly gashed and scarred by his forgotten engines, had, since the old days, put on a show of greenness here and there, and now

smiled forgivingly up at him, as if things were not so bad after all. A few birds were bathing in the ditch with a pleasant suggestion of its being a new and special provision of Nature, and a hare ran into an inverted sluice-box as he approached, as if it were put there for that purpose.

He had not yet dared to look in a certain direction. But the sun was now high enough to paint the little eminence on which the cabin stood. In spite of his self-control, his heart beat faster as he raised his eyes toward it. Its window and door were closed, no smoke came from its adobe chimney, but it was else unchanged. When within a few yards of it, he picked up a broken shovel, and shouldering it with a smile, he strode toward the door and knocked. There was no sound from within. The smile died upon his lips as he nervously pushed the door open.

A figure started up angrily and came toward him,—a figure whose bloodshot eyes suddenly fixed into a vacant stare, whose arms were at first outstretched and then thrown up in warning gesticulation,—a figure that suddenly gasped, choked, and then fell forward in a fit.

But before he touched the ground, York had him out into the open air and sunshine. In the struggle, both fell and rolled over on the ground. But the next moment York was sitting up, holding the convulsed frame of his former partner on his knee, and wiping the foam from his inarticulate lips. Gradually the tremor became less frequent and then ceased, and the strong man lay unconscious in his arms.

For some moments York held him quietly thus, looking in his face. Afar, the stroke of a woodman's axe—a mere phantom of sound—was all that broke the stillness. High up the mountain, a wheeling hawk hung breathlessly above them. And then came voices, and two men joined them.

"A fight?" No, a fit; and would they help him bring the sick man to the hotel?

And there for a week the stricken partner lay, unconscious of aught but the visions wrought by disease and fear. On the eighth day at sunrise he rallied, and opening his eyes, looked upon York and pressed his hand; then he spoke:—

"And it's you. I thought it was only whisky."

York replied by only taking both of his hands, boyishly working them backward and forward, as his elbow rested on the bed, with a pleasant smile.

"And you've been abroad. How did you like Paris?"

"So, so! How did *you* like Sacramento?"

"Bully!"

And that was all they could think to say. Presently Scott opened his eyes again.

"I'm mighty weak."

"You'll get better soon."

"Not much."

A long silence followed, in which they could hear the sounds of wood-chopping, and that Sandy Bar was already astir for the coming day. Then Scott slowly and with difficulty turned his face to York and said—

"I might hev killed you once."

"I wish you had."

They pressed each other's hands again, but Scott's grasp was evidently failing. He seemed to summon his energies for a special effort.

"Old man!"

"Old chap."

"Closer!"

York bent his head toward the slowly fading face.

"Do ye mind that morning?"

"Yes."

A gleam of fun slid into the corner of Scott's blue eye as he whispered—

“Old man, thar *was* too much saleratus in that bread!”

It is said that these were his last words. For when the sun, which had so often gone down upon the idle wrath of these foolish men, looked again upon them reunited, it saw the hand of Scott fall cold and irresponsive from the yearning clasp of his former partner, and it knew that the feud of Sandy Bar was at an end.

## Mr. Thompson's Prodigal.

WE all knew that Mr. Thompson was looking for his son, and a pretty bad one at that. That he was coming to California for this sole object was no secret to his fellow-passengers; and the physical peculiarities as well as the moral weaknesses of the missing prodigal were made equally plain to us through the frank volubility of the parent. "You was speaking of a young man which was hung at Red Dog for sluice-robbing," said Mr. Thompson to a steerage passenger one day; "be you aware of the colour of his eyes?" "Black," responded the passenger. "Ah!" said Mr. Thompson, referring to some mental memoranda, "Charles's eyes was blue." He then walked away. Perhaps it was from this unsympathetic mode of inquiry, perhaps it was from that Western predilection to take a humorous view of any principle or sentiment persistently brought before them, that Mr. Thompson's quest was the subject of some satire among the passengers. A gratuitous advertisement of the missing Charles, addressed to "Jailers and Guardians," circulated privately among them; everybody remembered to have met Charles under distressing circumstances. Yet it is but due to my countrymen to state that when it was known that Thompson had embarked some wealth in this visionary project, but little of this satire found its way to his ears, and nothing was uttered in his hearing that might bring a pang to a father's heart or imperil a

possible pecuniary advantage of the satirist. Indeed, Mr. Bracy Tibbets' jocular proposition to form a joint-stock company to "prospect" for the missing youth received at one time quite serious entertainment.

Perhaps to superficial criticism Mr. Thompson's nature was not picturesque nor lovable. His history, as imparted at dinner one day by himself, was practical even in its singularity. After a hard and wilful youth and maturity, in which he had buried a broken-spirited wife and driven his son to sea, he suddenly experienced religion. "I got it in New Orleans in '59," said Mr. Thompson, with the general suggestion of referring to an epidemic. "Enter ye the narrer gate. Parse me the beans." Perhaps this practical quality upheld him in his apparently hopeless search. He had no clew to the whereabouts of his runaway son; indeed, scarcely a proof of his present existence. From his indifferent recollection of the boy of twelve he now expected to identify the man of twenty-five.

It would seem that he was successful. How he succeeded was one of the few things he did not tell. There are, I believe, two versions of the story. One, that Mr. Thompson, visiting a hospital, discovered his son by reason of a peculiar hymn, chanted by the sufferer in a delirious dream of his boyhood. This version, giving as it did wide range to the finer feelings of the heart, was quite popular; and as told by the Rev. Mr. Gushington on his return from his California tour, never failed to satisfy an audience. The other was less simple, and, as I shall adopt it here, deserves more elaboration.

It was after Mr. Thompson had given up searching for his son among the living, and had taken to the examination of cemeteries and a careful inspection of the "*cold hic jacets* of the dead." At this time he was a frequent visitor of "Lone Mountain," a dreary hill-top, bleak enough in

its original isolation, and bleaker for the whitefaced marbles by which San Francisco anchored her departed citizens, and kept them down in a shifting sand that refused to cover them, and against a fierce and persistent wind that strove to blow them utterly away. Against this wind the old man opposed a will quite as persistent, a grizzled hard face, and a tall crape-bound hat drawn tightly over his eyes,—and so spent days in reading the mortuary inscriptions audibly to himself. The frequency of Scriptural quotation pleased him, and he was fond of corroborating them by a pocket Bible. “That’s from Psalms,” he said one day to an adjacent gravedigger. The man made no reply. Not at all rebuffed, Mr. Thompson at once slid down into the open grave with a more practical inquiry, “Did you ever, in your profession, come across Charles Thompson?” “Thompson be d—d!” said the gravedigger, with great directness. “Which, if he hadn’t religion, I think he is,” responded the old man, as he clambered out of the grave.

It was perhaps on this occasion that Mr. Thompson stayed later than usual. As he turned his face toward the city, lights were beginning to twinkle ahead, and a fierce wind, made visible by fog, drove him forward, or, lying in wait, charged him angrily from the corners of deserted suburban streets. It was at one of these corners that something else, quite as indistinct and malevolent, leaped upon him with an oath, a presented pistol, and a demand for money. But it was met by a will of iron and a grip of steel. The assailant and assailed rolled together on the ground. But the next moment the old man was erect; one hand grasping the captured pistol, the other clutching at arm’s length the throat of a figure, surly, youthful, and savage.

“Young man,” said Mr. Thompson, setting his thin lips together, “what might be your name?”

"Thompson!"

The old man's hand slid from the throat to the arm of his prisoner without relaxing its firmness.

"Charles Thompson, come with me," he said presently, and marched his captive to the hotel. What took place there has not transpired, but it was known the next morning that Mr. Thompson had found his son.

It is proper to add to the above improbable story, that there was nothing in the young man's appearance or manners to justify it. Grave, reticent, and handsome, devoted to his newly found parent, he assumed the emoluments and responsibilities of his new condition with a certain serious ease that more nearly approached that which San Francisco society lacked and—rejected. Some chose to despise this quality as a tendency to "psalm-singing;" others saw in it the inherited qualities of the parent, and were ready to prophesy for the son the same hard old age. But all agreed that it was not inconsistent with the habits of money-getting for which father and son were respected.

And yet the old man did not seem to be happy. Perhaps it was that the consummation of his wishes left him without a practical mission; perhaps—and it is the more probable—he had little love for the son he had regained. The obedience he exacted was freely given, the reform he had set his heart upon was complete; and yet somehow it did not seem to please him. In reclaiming his son he had fulfilled all the requirements that his religious duty required of him, and yet the act seemed to lack sanctification. In this perplexity he read again the parable of the Prodigal Son, which he had long ago adopted for his guidance, and found that he had omitted the final feast of reconciliation. This seemed to offer the proper quality of ceremoniousness in the sacrament between himself and his son; and so, a year after the appearance of Charles, he set about

giving him a party. "Invite everybody, Charles," he said dryly; "everybody who knows that I brought you out of the wine-husks of iniquity and the company of harlots, and bid them eat, drink, and be merry."

Perhaps the old man had another reason, not yet clearly analysed. The fine house he had built on the sandhills sometimes seemed lonely and bare. He often found himself trying to reconstruct, from the grave features of Charles, the little boy whom he but dimly remembered in the past, and of whom lately he had been thinking a great deal. He believed this to be a sign of impending old age and childishness; but coming one day, in his formal drawing-room, upon a child of one of the servants, who had strayed therein, he would have taken him in his arms, but the child fled from before his grizzled face. So that it seemed eminently proper to invite a number of people to his house, and from the array of San Francisco maidenhood to select a daughter-in-law. And then there would be a child—a boy, whom he could "rare up" from the beginning, and love—as he did not love Charles.

We were all at the party. The Smiths, Joneses, Browns, and Robinsons also came, in that fine flow of animal spirits, unchecked by any respect for the entertainer, which most of us are apt to find so fascinating. The proceedings would have been somewhat riotous but for the social position of the actors. In fact, Mr. Bracy Tibbets, having naturally a fine appreciation of a humorous situation, but further impelled by the bright eyes of the Jones girls, conducted himself so remarkably as to attract the serious regard of Mr. Charles Thompson, who approached him, saying quietly, "You look ill, Mr. Tibbets; let me conduct you to your carriage. Resist, you hound, and I'll throw you through that window. This way, please; the room is close and distressing." It is hardly necessary to say that but a part of

this speech was audible to the company, and that the rest was not divulged by Mr. Tibbets, who afterwards regretted the sudden illness which kept him from witnessing a certain amusing incident, which the fastest Miss Jones characterised as the "richest part of the blow-out," and which I hasten to record.

It was at supper. It was evident that Mr. Thompson had overlooked much lawlessness in the conduct of the younger people in his abstract contemplation of some impending event. When the cloth was removed, he rose to his feet and grimly tapped upon the table. A titter, that broke out among the Jones girls, became epidemic on one side of the board. Charles Thompson, from the foot of the table, looked up in tender perplexity. "He's going to sing a Doxology," "He's going to pray," "Silence for a speech," ran round the room.

"It's one year to-day, Christian brothers and sisters," said Mr. Thompson with grim deliberation,— "one year to-day since my son came home from eating of wine-husks and spending of his substance on harlots." (The tittering suddenly ceased.) "Look at him now. Charles Thompson, stand up." (Charles Thompson stood up.) "One year ago to-day,—and look at him now."

He was certainly a handsome prodigal, standing there in his cheerful evening-dress,—a repentant prodigal, with sad obedient eyes turned upon the harsh and unsympathetic glance of his father. The youngest Miss Smith, from the pure depths of her foolish little heart, moved unconsciously toward him.

"It's fifteen years ago since he left my house," said Mr. Thompson, "a rovier and a prodigal. I was myself a man of sin, O Christian friends,—a man of wrath and bitterness"—("Amen," from the eldest Miss Smith)—"but praise be God, I've fled the wrath to come. It's five years ago since

I got the peace that passeth understanding. Have you got it, friends?" (A general sub-chorus of "No, no," from the girls, and, "Pass the word for it," from Midshipman Coxe, of the U.S. sloop Wethersfield.) "Knock, and it shall be opened to you.

"And when I found the error of my ways, and the preciousness of grace," continued Mr. Thompson, "I came to give it to my son. By sea and land I sought him far, and fainted not. I did not wait for him to come to me, which the same I might have done, and justified myself by the Book of books, but I sought him out among his husks, and" (the rest of the sentence was lost, in the rustling withdrawal of the ladies). "Works, Christian friends, is my motto. By their works shall ye know them, and there is mine."

The particular and accepted work to which Mr. Thompson was alluding had turned quite pale, and was looking fixedly toward an open door leading to the veranda, lately filled by gaping servants, and now the scene of some vague tumult. As the noise continued, a man, shabbily dressed and evidently in liquor, broke through the opposing guardians and staggered into the room. The transition from the fog and darkness without to the glare and heat within evidently dazzled and stupefied him. He removed his battered hat, and passed it once or twice before his eyes, as he steadied himself, but unsuccessfully, by the back of a chair. Suddenly his wandering glance fell upon the pale face of Charles Thompson; and with a gleam of childlike recognition, and a weak falsetto laugh, he darted forward, caught at the table, upset the glasses, and literally fell upon the prodigal's breast.

"Sha'ly! yo' d—d ol' scoun'rel, hoo rar ye!"

"Hush!—sit down!—hush!" said Charles Thompson, hurriedly endeavouring to extricate himself from the embrace of his unexpected guest.

"Look at 'm!" continued the stranger, unheeding the admonition, but suddenly holding the unfortunate Charles at arm's length, in loving and undisguised admiration of his festive appearance. "Look at 'm! Ain't he nasty? Sha'ls, I'm prow of yer!"

"Leave the house!" said Mr. Thompson, rising, with a dangerous look in his cold grey eye. "Char-les, how dare you?"

"Simmer down, ole man! Sha'ls, who's th' ol' bloat? Eh?"

"Hush, man; here, take this!" With nervous hands, Charles Thompson filled a glass with liquor. "Drink it and go—until to-morrow—any time, but—leave us!—go now!" But even then, ere the miserable wretch could drink, the old man, pale with passion, was upon him. Half carrying him in his powerful arms, half-dragging him through the circling crowd of frightened guests, he had reached the door, swung open by the waiting servants, when Charles Thompson started from a seeming stupor, crying—

"Stop!"

The old man stopped. Through the open door the fog and wind drove chilly. "What does this mean?" he asked, turning a baleful face on Charles.

"Nothing—but stop—for God's sake. Wait till to-morrow, but not to-night. Do not, I implore you—do this thing."

There was something in the tone of the young man's voice, something, perhaps, in the contact of the struggling wretch he held in his powerful arms; but a dim, indefinite fear took possession of the old man's heart. "Who," he whispered hoarsely, "is this man?"

Charles did not answer.

"Stand back, there, all of you," thundered Mr. Thompson, to the crowding guests around him. "Char-les—come

here ! I command you—I—I—I—beg you—tell me *who* is this man ? ”

Only two persons heard the answer that came faintly from the lips of Charles Thompson—

“YOUR SON.”

When day broke over the bleak sandhills, the guests had departed from Mr. Thompson's banquet-halls. The lights still burned dimly and coldly in the deserted rooms,—deserted by all but three figures, that huddled together in the chill drawing-room, as if for warmth. One lay in drunken slumber on a couch ; at his feet sat he who had been known as Charles Thompson ; and beside them, haggard and shrunk to half his size, bowed the figure of Mr. Thompson, his grey eye fixed, his elbows upon his knees, and his hands clasped over his ears, as if to shut out the sad, entreating voice that seemed to fill the room.

“God knows, I did not set about to wilfully deceive. The name I gave that night was the first that came into my thought,—the name of one whom I thought dead,—the dissolute companion of my shame. And when you questioned further, I used the knowledge that I gained from him to touch your heart to set me free ; only, I swear, for that ! But when you told me who you were, and I first saw the opening of another life before me—then—then—O sir, if I was hungry, homeless, and reckless when I would have robbed you of your gold, I was heart-sick, helpless, and desperate when I would have robbed you of your love ! ”

The old man stirred not. From his luxurious couch the newly found prodigal snored peacefully.

“I had no father I could claim. I never knew a home but this. I was tempted. I have been happy,—very happy.”

He rose and stood before the old man.

“Do not fear that I shall come between your son and his inheritance. To-day I leave this place, never to return.

The world is large, sir, and, thanks to your kindness, I now see the way by which an honest livelihood is gained. Good-bye. You will not take my hand? Well, well! Good-bye."

He turned to go. But when he had reached the door he suddenly came back, and, raising with both hands the grizzled head, he kissed it once and twice.

"Char-les!"

There was no reply.

"Char-les!"

The old man rose with a frightened air, and tottered feebly to the door. It was open. There came to him the awakened tumult of a great city, in which the prodigal's footsteps were lost for ever.

## The Romance of Madroño Hollow.

THE latch on the garden gate of the Folinsbee Ranch clicked twice. The gate itself was so much in shadow that lovely night, that "old man Folinsbee," sitting on his porch, could distinguish nothing but a tall white hat and beside it a few fluttering ribbons, under the pines that marked the entrance. Whether because of this fact, or that he considered a sufficient time had elapsed since the clicking of the latch for more positive disclosure, I do not know; but after a few moments' hesitation he quietly laid aside his pipe and walked slowly down the winding path toward the gate. At the Ceanothus hedge he stopped and listened.

There was not much to hear. The hat was saying to the ribbons that it was a fine night, and remarking generally upon the clear outline of the Sierras against the blue-black sky. The ribbons, it so appeared, had admired this all the way home, and asked the hat if it had ever seen anything half so lovely as the moonlight on the summit. The hat never had; it recalled some lovely nights in the South in Alabama ("in the South in Ahlabahm" was the way the old man heard it), but then there were other things that made this night seem so pleasant. The ribbons could not possibly conceive what the hat could be thinking about. At this point there was a pause, of which Mr. Folinsbee availed himself to walk very grimly and craunchingly down the gravel-walk toward the gate. Then the hat was lifted,

and disappeared in the shadow, and Mr. Folinsbee confronted only the half-foolish, half-mischievous, but wholly pretty face of his daughter.

It was afterwards known to Madroño Hollow that sharp words passed between "Miss Jo" and the old man, and that the latter coupled the names of one Culpepper Starbottle and his uncle, Colonel Starbottle, with certain complimentary epithets, and that Miss Jo retaliated sharply. "Her father's blood before her father's face boiled up and proved her truly of his race," quoted the blacksmith, who leaned toward the noble verse of Byron. "She saw the old man's bluff and raised him," was the direct comment of the college-bred Masters.

Meanwhile the subject of these animadversions proceeded slowly along the road to a point where the Folinsbee mansion came in view,—a long, narrow, white building, unpretentious, yet superior to its neighbours, and bearing some evidences of taste and refinement in the vines that clambered over its porch, in its French windows, and the white muslin curtains that kept out the fierce California sun by day, and were now touched with silver in the gracious moonlight. Culpepper leaned against the low fence, and gazed long and earnestly at the building. Then the moonlight vanished ghostlike from one of the windows, a material glow took its place, and a girlish figure, holding a candle, drew the white curtains together. To Culpepper it was a vestal virgin standing before a hallowed shrine; to the prosaic observer I fear it was only a fair-haired young woman, whose wicked black eyes still shone with unfilial warmth. Howbeit, when the figure had disappeared, he stepped out briskly into the moonlight of the highroad. Here he took off his distinguishing hat to wipe his forehead, and the moon shone full upon his face.

It was not an unprepossessing one, albeit a trifle too thin

and lank and bilious to be altogether pleasant. The cheek-bones were prominent, and the black eyes sunken in their orbits. Straight black hair fell slantwise off a high but narrow forehead, and swept part of a hollow cheek. A long black mustache followed the perpendicular curves of his mouth. It was on the whole a serious, even Quixotic face, but at times it was relieved by a rare smile of such tender and even pathetic sweetness, that Miss Jo is reported to have said that, if it would only last through the ceremony, she would have married its possessor on the spot. "I once told him so," added that shameless young woman; "but the man instantly fell into a settled melancholy, and hasn't smiled since."

A half mile below the Folinsbee Ranch the white road dipped and was crossed by a trail that ran through Madroño Hollow. Perhaps because it was a near cut-off to the settlement, perhaps from some less practical reason, Culpepper took this trail, and in a few moments stood among the rarely beautiful trees that gave their name to the valley. Even in that uncertain light the weird beauty of these harlequin masqueraders was apparent; their red trunks—a blush in the moonlight, a deep blood-stain in the shadow—stood out against the silvery green foliage. It was as if Nature in some gracious moment had here caught and crystallised the gipsy memories of the transplanted Spaniard, to cheer him in his lonely exile.

As Culpepper entered the grove he heard loud voices. As he turned toward a clump of trees, a figure so *bizarre* and characteristic that it might have been a resident Daphne—a figure over-dressed in crimson silk and lace, with bare brown arms and shoulders, and a wreath of honey-suckle—stepped out of the shadow. It was followed by a man. Culpepper started. To come to the point briefly, he recognised in the man the features of his respected

uncle, Colonel Starbottle ; in the female, a lady who may be briefly described as one possessing absolutely no claim to an introduction to the polite reader. To hurry over equally unpleasant details, both were evidently under the influence of liquor.

From the exciting conversation that ensued, Culpepper gathered that some insult had been put upon the lady at a public ball which she had attended that evening ; that the Colonel, her escort, had failed to resent it with the sanguinary completeness that she desired. I regret that, even in a liberal age, I may not record the exact and even picturesque language in which this was conveyed to her hearers. Enough that at the close of a fiery peroration, with feminine inconsistency she flew at the gallant Colonel, and would have visited her delayed vengeance upon his luckless head, but for the prompt interference of Culpepper. Thwarted in this, she threw herself upon the ground, and then into unpicturesque hysterics. There was a fine moral lesson, not only in this grotesque performance of a sex which cannot afford to be grotesque, but in the ludicrous concern with which it inspired the two men. Culpepper, to whom woman was more or less angelic, was pained and sympathetic ; the Colonel to whom she was more or less improper, was exceedingly terrified and embarrassed. Howbeit the storm was soon over, and after Mistress Dolores had returned a little dagger to its sheath (her garter), she quietly took herself out of Madroño Hollow, and happily out of these pages for ever. The two men, left to themselves, conversed in low tones. Dawn stole upon them before they separated : the Colonel quite sobered and in full possession of his usual jaunty self-assertion ; Culpepper with a baleful glow in his hollow cheek, and in his dark eyes a rising fire.

The next morning the general ear of Madroño Hollow

was filled with rumours of the Colonel's mishap. It was asserted that he had been invited to withdraw his female companion from the floor of the Assembly Ball at the Independence Hotel, and that, failing to do this, both were expelled. It is to be regretted that in 1854 public opinion was divided in regard to the propriety of this step, and that there was some discussion as to the comparative virtue of the ladies who were not expelled ; but it was generally conceded that the real *casus belli* was political. "Is this a dashed Puritan meeting?" had asked the Colonel savagely. "It's no Pike County shindig," had responded the floor-manager, cheerfully. "You're a Yank!" had screamed the Colonel, profanely qualifying the noun. "Get! you border ruffian," was the reply. Such at least was the substance of the reports. As, at that sincere epoch, expressions like the above were usually followed by prompt action, a fracas was confidently looked for.

Nothing, however, occurred. Colonel Starbottle made his appearance next day upon the streets with somewhat of his usual pomposity, a little restrained by the presence of his nephew, who accompanied him, and who, as a universal favourite, also exercised some restraint upon the curious and impertinent. But Culpepper's face wore a look of anxiety quite at variance with his usual grave repose. "The Don don't seem to take the old man's set-back kindly," observed the sympathising blacksmith. "P'r'aps he was sweet on Dolores himself," suggested the sceptical expressman.

It was a bright morning, a week after this occurrence, that Miss Jo Folinsbee stepped from her garden into the road. This time the latch did not click as she cautiously closed the gate behind her. After a moment's irresolution, which would have been awkward but that it was charmingly employed, after the manner of her sex, in adjusting a bow

under a dimpled but rather prominent chin, and in pulling down the fingers of a neatly fitting glove, she tripped toward the settlement. Small wonder that a passing teamster drove his six mules into the wayside ditch and imperilled his load to keep the dust from her spotless garments; small wonder that the "Lightning Express" withheld its speed and flash to let her pass, and that the expressman, who had never been known to exchange more than rapid monosyllables with his fellow-man, gazed after her with breathless admiration. For she was certainly attractive. In a country where the ornamental sex followed the example of youthful Nature, and were prone to overdress and glaring efflorescence, Miss Jo's simple and tasteful raiment added much to the physical charm of, if it did not actually suggest a sentiment to, her presence. It is said that Euchre-deck Billy, working in the gulch at the crossing, never saw Miss Folinsbee pass but that he always remarked apologetically to his partner, that "he believed he *must* write a letter home." Even Bill Masters, who saw her in Paris presented to the favourable criticism of that most fastidious man, the late Emperor, said that she was stunning, but a big discount on what she was at Madroño Hollow.

It was still early morning, but the sun, with California extravagance, had already begun to beat hotly on the little chip hat and blue ribbons, and Miss Jo was obliged to seek the shade of a bypath. Here she received the timid advances of a vagabond yellow dog graciously, until, emboldened by his success, he insisted upon accompanying her, and, becoming slobberingly demonstrative, threatened her spotless skirt with his dusty paws, when she drove him from her with some slight acerbity, and a stone which haply fell within fifty feet of its destined mark. Having thus proved her ability to defend herself, with characteristic inconsistency she took a small panic, and, gathering her

white skirts in one hand, and holding the brim of her hat over her eyes with the other, she ran swiftly at least a hundred yards before she stopped. Then she began picking some ferns and a few wildflowers still spared to the withered fields, and then a sudden distrust of her small ankles seized her, and she inspected them narrowly for those burrs and bugs and snakes which are supposed to lie in wait for helpless womanhood. Then she plucked some golden heads of wild oats, and with a sudden inspiration placed them in her black hair, and then came quite unconsciously upon the trail leading to Madroño Hollow.

Here she hesitated. Before her ran the little trail, vanishing at last into the bosky depths below. The sun was very hot. She must be very far from home. Why should she not rest awhile under the shade of a madroño?

She answered these questions by going there at once. After thoroughly exploring the grove, and satisfying herself that it contained no other living human creature, she sat down under one of the largest trees with a satisfactory little sigh. Miss Jo loved the madroño. It was a cleanly tree; no dust ever lay upon its varnished leaves; its immaculate shade never was known to harbour grub or insect.

She looked up at the rosy arms interlocked and arched above her head. She looked down at the delicate ferns and cryptogams at her feet. Something glittered at the root of the tree. She picked it up; it was a bracelet. She examined it carefully for cipher or inscription; there was none. She could not resist a natural desire to clasp it on her arm, and to survey it from that advantageous view-point. This absorbed her attention for some moments; and when she looked up again she beheld at a little distance Culpepper Starbottle.

He was standing where he had halted, with instinctive delicacy, on first discovering her. Indeed, he had even

deliberated whether he ought not to go away without disturbing her. But some fascination held him to the spot. Wonderful power of humanity ! Far beyond jutted an outlying spur of the Sierra, vast, compact, and silent. Scarcely a hundred yards away, a league-long chasm dropped its sheer walls of granite a thousand feet. On every side rose up the serried ranks of pine trees, in whose close-set files centuries of storm and change had wrought no breach. Yet all this seemed to Culpepper to have been planned by an allwise Providence as the natural background to the figure of a pretty girl in a yellow dress.

Although Miss Jo had confidently expected to meet Culpepper somewhere in her ramble, now that he came upon her suddenly, she felt disappointed and embarrassed. His manner, too, was more than usually grave and serious, and more than ever seemed to jar upon that audacious levity which was this giddy girl's power and security in a society where all feeling was dangerous. As he approached her she rose to her feet, but almost before she knew it he had taken her hand and drawn her to a seat beside him. This was not what Miss Jo had expected, but nothing is so difficult to predicate as the exact preliminaries of a declaration of love.

What did Culpepper say ? Nothing, I fear, that will add anything to the wisdom of the reader ; nothing, I fear, that Miss Jo had not heard substantially from other lips before. But there was a certain conviction, fire-speed, and fury in the manner that was deliciously novel to the young lady. It was certainly something to be courted in the nineteenth century with all the passion and extravagance of the sixteenth ; it was something to hear, amid the slang of a frontier society, the language of knight-errantry poured into her ear by this lantern-jawed, dark-browed descendant of the Cavaliers.

I do not know that there was anything more in it. The

facts, however, go to show that at a certain point Miss Jo dropped her glove, and that in recovering it Culpepper possessed himself first of her hand and then her lips. When they stood up to go, Culpepper had his arm around her waist, and her black hair, with its sheaf of golden oats, rested against the breast-pocket of his coat. But even then I do not think her fancy was entirely captive. She took a certain satisfaction in this demonstration of Culpepper's splendid height, and mentally compared it with a former flame, one Lieutenant McMirk, an active but under-sized Hector, who subsequently fell a victim to the incautiously composed and monotonous beverages of a frontier garrison. Nor was she so much preoccupied but that her quick eyes, even while absorbing Culpepper's glances, were yet able to detect, at a distance, the figure of a man approaching. In an instant she slipped out of Culpepper's arm, and, whipping her hands behind her, said, "There's that horrid man!"

Culpepper looked up and beheld his respected uncle panting and blowing over the hill. His brow contracted as he turned to Miss Jo: "You don't like my uncle!"

"I hate him!" Miss Jo was recovering her ready tongue.

Culpepper blushed. He would have liked to enter upon some details of the Colonel's pedigree and exploits, but there was not time. He only smiled sadly. The smile melted Miss Jo. She held out her hand quickly, and said with even more than her usual effrontery, "Don't let that man get you into any trouble. Take care of yourself, dear, and don't let anything happen to you."

Miss Jo intended this speech to be pathetic; the tenure of life among her lovers had hitherto been very uncertain. Culpepper turned toward her, but she had already vanished in the thicket.

The Colonel came up panting. "I've looked all over

town for you, and be dashed to you, sir. Who was that with you?"

"A lady." (Culpepper never lied, but he was discreet.)

"D—n 'em all! Look yar, Culp, I've spotted the man who gave the order to put me off the floor" ("flo" was what the Colonel said) "the other night!"

"Who was it?" asked Culpepper, listlessly.

"Jack Folinsbee."

"Who?"

"Why, the son of that dashed, nigger-worshipping, psalm-singing, Puritan Yankee. What's the matter, now? Look yar, Culp, you ain't goin' back on your blood, are ye? You ain't goin' back on your word? Ye ain't going down at the feet of this trash, like a whipped hound?"

Culpepper was silent. He was very white. Presently he looked up and said quietly, "No."

Culpepper Starbottle had challenged Jack Folinsbee, and the challenge was accepted. The cause alleged was the expelling of Culpepper's uncle from the floor of the Assembly Ball by the order of Folinsbee. This much Madroño Hollow knew and could swear to; but there were other strange rumours afloat, of which the blacksmith was an able expounder. "You see, gentlemen," he said to the crowd gathered around his anvil, "I ain't got no theory of this affair; I only give a few facts as have come to my knowledge. Culpepper and Jack meets quite accidental like in Bob's saloon. Jack goes up to Culpepper and says, 'A word with you.' Culpepper bows and steps aside in this way, Jack standing about *here*." (The blacksmith demonstrates the position of the parties with two old horse-shoes on the anvil.) "Jack pulls a bracelet from his pocket and says, 'Do you know that bracelet?' Culpepper says, 'I do not,' quite cool-like and easy. Jack says, 'You gave

it to my sister.' Culpepper says, still cool as you please, 'I did not.' Jack says, 'You lie, G—d d—n you,' and draws his derringer. Culpepper jumps forward about here" (reference is made to the diagram) "and Jack fires. Nobody hit. It's a mighty cur'o's thing, gentlemen," continued the blacksmith, dropping suddenly into the abstract, and leaning meditatively on his anvil,—“it's a mighty cur'o's thing that nobody gets hit so often. You and me empties our revolvers sociably at each other over a little game, and the room full, and nobody gets hit ! That's what gets me.”

“Never mind, Thompson,” chimed in Bill Masters ; “there's another and a better world where we shall know all that, and—become better shots. Go on with your story.”

“Well, some grabs Culpepper and some grabs Jack, and so separates them. Then Jack tells 'em as how he had seen his sister wear a bracelet which he knew was one that had been given to Dolores by Colonel Starbottle. That Miss Jo wouldn't say where she got it, but owned up to having seen Culpepper that day. Then, the most cur'o's thing of it yet, what does Culpepper do but rise up and takes all back that he said, and allows that he *did* give her the bracelet. Now my opinion, gentlemen, is that he lied ; it ain't like that man to give a gal that he respects anything of off that piece, Dolores. But it's all the same now, and there's but one thing to be done.”

The way this one thing was done belongs to the record of Madroño Hollow. The morning was bright and clear ; the air was slightly chill, but that was from the mist which arose along the banks of the river. As early as six o'clock the designated ground—a little opening in the madroño grove—was occupied by Culpepper Starbottle, Colonel Starbottle, his second, and the surgeon. The Colonel was exalted and excited, albeit in a rather imposing, dignified way, and pointed out to the surgeon the excellence of the

ground, which at that hour was wholly shaded from the sun, whose steady stare is more or less discomposing to your duellist. The surgeon threw himself on the grass and smoked his cigar. Culpepper, quiet and thoughtful, leaned against a tree and gazed up the river. There was a strange suggestion of a picnic about the group, which was heightened when the Colonel drew a bottle from his coat-tails, and, taking a preliminary draught, offered it to the others. "Cocktails, sir," he explained with dignified precision. "A gentleman, sir, should never go out without 'em. Keeps off the morning chill. I remember going out in '53 with Hank Boompointer. Good ged, sir, the man had to put on his overcoat, and was shot in it. Fact!"

But the noise of wheels drowned the Colonel's reminiscences, and a rapidly driven buggy, containing Jack Folinsbee, Calhoun Bungstarter, his second, and Bill Masters, drew up on the ground. Jack Folinsbee leaped out gaily. "I had the jolliest work to get away without the governor's hearing," he began, addressing the group before him with the greatest volubility. Calhoun Bungstarter touched his arm, and the young man blushed. It was his first duel.

"If you are ready, gentlemen," said Mr. Bungstarter, "we had better proceed to business. I believe it is understood that no apology will be offered or accepted. We may as well settle preliminaries at once, or I fear we shall be interrupted. There is a rumour in town that the Vigilance Committee are seeking our friends the Starbottles, and I believe, as their fellow-countryman, I have the honour to be included in their warrant."

At this probability of interruption, that gravity which had hitherto been wanting fell upon the group. The preliminaries were soon arranged and the principals placed in position. Then there was a silence.

To a spectator from the hill, impressed with the picnic

suggestion, what might have been the popping of two champagne corks broke the stillness.

Culpepper had fired in the air. Colonel Starbottle uttered a low curse. Jack Folinsbee sulkily demanded another shot.

Again the parties stood opposed to each other. Again the word was given, and what seemed to be the simultaneous report of both pistols rose upon the air. But after an interval of a few seconds all were surprised to see Culpepper slowly raise his unexploded weapon and fire it harmlessly above his head. Then throwing the pistol upon the ground, he walked to a tree and leaned silently against it. Jack Folinsbee flew into a paroxysm of fury. Colonel Starbottle raved and swore. Mr. Bungstarter was properly shocked at their conduct. "Really, gentlemen, if Mr. Culpepper Starbottle declines another shot, I do not see how we can proceed."

But the Colonel's blood was up, and Jack Folinsbee was equally implacable. A hurried consultation ensued, which ended by Colonel Starbottle taking his nephew's place as principal, Bill Masters acting as second, *vice* Mr. Bungstarter, who declined all further connection with the affair.

Two distinct reports rang through the Hollow. Jack Folinsbee dropped his smoking pistol, took a step forward, and then dropped heavily upon his face.

In a moment the surgeon was at his side. The confusion was heightened by the trampling of hoofs, and the voice of the blacksmith bidding them flee for their lives before the coming storm. A moment more and the ground was cleared, and the surgeon, looking up, beheld only the white face of Culpepper bending over him.

"Can you save him?"

"I cannot say. Hold up his head a moment while I run to the buggy."

Culpepper passed his arm tenderly around the neck of the insensible man. Presently the surgeon returned with some stimulants.

“There, that will do, Mr. Starbottle, thank you. Now my advice is to get away from here while you can. I’ll look after Folinsbee. Do you hear?”

Culpepper’s arm was still round the neck of his late foe, but his head had dropped and fallen on the wounded man’s shoulder. The surgeon looked down, and catching sight of his face, stooped and lifted him gently in his arms. He opened his coat and waistcoat. There was blood upon his shirt and a bullet-hole in his breast. He had been shot unto death at the first fire!

## The Poet of Sierra Flat.

As the enterprising editor of the "Sierra Flat Record" stood at his case setting type for his next week's paper, he could not help hearing the woodpeckers who were busy on the roof above his head. It occurred to him that possibly the birds had not yet learned to recognise in the rude structure any improvement on Nature, and this idea pleased him so much that he incorporated it in the editorial article which he was then doubly composing. For the editor was also printer of the "Record;" and although that remarkable journal was reputed to exert a power felt through all Calaveras and a great part of Tuolumne County, strict economy was one of the conditions of its beneficent existence.

Thus preoccupied, he was startled by the sudden irruption of a small roll of manuscript, which was thrown through the open door and fell at his feet. He walked quickly to the threshold and looked down the tangled trail which led to the highroad. But there was nothing to suggest the presence of his mysterious contributor. A hare limped slowly away, a green-and-gold lizard paused upon a pine stump, the woodpeckers ceased their work. So complete had been his sylvan seclusion, that he found it difficult to connect any human agency with the act; rather the hare seemed to have an inexpressibly guilty look, the woodpeckers to maintain a significant silence, and the lizard to be conscience-stricken into stone.

An examination of the manuscript, however, corrected this injustice to defenceless Nature. It was evidently of human origin,—being verse, and of exceeding bad quality. The editor laid it aside. As he did so he thought he saw a face at the window. Sallying out in some indignation, he penetrated the surrounding thicket in every direction, but his search was as fruitless as before. The poet, if it were he, was gone.

A few days after this the editorial seclusion was invaded by voices of alternate expostulation and entreaty. Stepping to the door, the editor was amazed at beholding Mr. Morgan McCorkle, a well-known citizen of Angels, and a subscriber to the "Record," in the act of urging, partly by force and partly by argument, an awkward young man toward the building. When he had finally effected his object, and, as it were, safely landed his prize in a chair, Mr. McCorkle took off his hat, carefully wiped the narrow isthmus of forehead which divided his black brows from his stubby hair, and, with an explanatory wave of his hand toward his reluctant companion, said, "A borned poet, and the cussedest fool you ever seed!"

Accepting the editor's smile as a recognition of the introduction, Mr. McCorkle panted and went on: "Didn't want to come! 'Mister Editor don't want to see me, Morg,' sez he. 'Milt,' sez I, 'he do; a borned poet like you and a gifted genius like he oughter come together sociable!' And I fetched him. Ah, will yer?" The born poet had, after exhibiting signs of great distress, started to run. But Mr. McCorkle was down upon him instantly, seizing him by his long linen coat, and settled him back in his chair. "'Tain't no use stampeding. Yer ye are and yer ye stays. For yer a borned poet,—ef ye are as shy as a jackass-rabbit. Look at 'im now!"

He certainly was not an attractive picture. There was

hardly a notable feature in his weak face, except his eyes, which were moist and shy, and not unlike the animal to which Mr. McCorkle had compared him. It was the face that the editor had seen at the window.

"Knowed him for fower year,—since he war a boy," continued Mr. McCorkle in a loud whisper. "Allers the same, bless you! Can jerk a rhyme as easy as turnin' jack. Never had any eddication; lived out in Missooray all his life. But he's chock full o' poetry. On'y this mornin' sez I to him,—he camps along o' me,—'Milt!' sez I, 'are breakfast ready?' and he up and answers back quite peart and chipper, 'The breakfast it is ready, and the birds is singing free, and it's risin' in the dawnin' light is happiness to me!' When a man," said Mr. McCorkle, dropping his voice with deep solemnity, "gets off things like them, without any call to do it, and handlin' flapjacks over a cook-stove at the same time,—that man's a borned poet."

There was an awkward pause. Mr. McCorkle beamed patronisingly on his protégé. The born poet looked as if he were meditating another flight,—not a metaphorical one. The editor asked if he could do anything for them.

"In course you can," responded Mr. McCorkle, "that's jest it. Milt, where's that poetry?"

The editor's countenance fell as the poet produced from his pocket a roll of manuscript. He, however, took it mechanically and glanced over it. It was evidently a duplicate of the former mysterious contribution.

The editor then spoke briefly but earnestly. I regret that I cannot recall his exact words, but it appeared that never before, in the history of the "Record," had the pressure been so great upon its columns. Matters of paramount importance, deeply affecting the material progress of Sierra, questions touching the absolute integrity of Calaveras and Tuolumne as social communities, were even now waiting

expression. Weeks, nay, months, must elapse before that pressure would be removed, and the "Record" could grapple with any but the sternest of topics. Again, the editor had noticed with pain the absolute decline of poetry in the foothills of the Sierras. Even the works of Byron and Moore attracted no attention in Dutch Flat, and a prejudice seemed to exist against Tennyson in Grass Valley. But the editor was not without hope for the future. In the course of four or five years, when the country was settled—

"What would be the cost to print this yer?" interrupted Mr. McCorkle, quietly.

"About fifty dollars, as an advertisement," responded the editor with cheerful alacrity.

Mr. McCorkle placed the sum in the editor's hand. "Yer see thet's what I sez to Milt. 'Milt,' sez I, 'pay as you go, for you are a borned poet. Hevin' no call to write, but doin' it free and spontaneous like, in course you pays. Thet's why Mr. Editor never printed your poetry.'"

"What name shall I put to it?" asked the editor.

"Milton."

It was the first word that the born poet had spoken during the interview, and his voice was so very sweet and musical that the editor looked at him curiously, and wondered if he had a sister.

"Milton! is that all?"

"Thet's his furst name," exclaimed Mr. McCorkle.

The editor here suggested that as there had been another poet of that name—

"Milt might be took for him! Thet's bad," reflected Mr. McCorkle with simple gravity. "Well, put down his full name,—Milton Chubbuck."

The editor made a note of the fact. "I'll set it up now," he said. This was also a hint that the interview was ended. The poet and patron, arm in arm, drew towards the door.

"In next week's paper," said the editor smilingly, in answer to the childlike look of inquiry in the eyes of the poet, and in another moment they were gone.

The editor was as good as his word. He straightway betook himself to his case, and, unrolling the manuscript, began his task. The woodpeckers on the roof recommenced theirs, and in a few moments the former sylvan seclusion was restored. There was no sound in the barren, barn-like room but the birds above, and below the click of the composing-rule as the editor marshalled the types into lines in his stick, and arrayed them in solid column on the galley. Whatever might have been his opinion of the copy before him, there was no indication of it in his face, which wore the stolid indifference of his craft. Perhaps this was unfortunate, for as the day wore on and the level rays of the sun began to pierce the adjacent thicket, they sought out and discovered an anxious ambushed figure drawn up beside the editor's window,—a figure that had sat there motionless for hours. Within, the editor worked on as steadily and impassively as Fate. And without, the born poet of Sierra Flat sat and watched him as waiting its decree.

The effect of the poem on Sierra Flat was remarkable and unprecedented. The absolute vileness of its doggerel, the gratuitous imbecility of its thought, and above all the crowning audacity of the fact that it was the work of a citizen and published in the county paper, brought it instantly into popularity. For many months Calaveras had languished for a sensation; since the last Vigilance Committee nothing had transpired to dispel the listless ennui begotten of stagnant business and growing civilisation. In more prosperous moments the office of the "Record" would have been simply gutted and the editor deported;

at present the paper was in such demand that the edition was speedily exhausted. In brief, the poem of Mr. Milton Chubbuck came like a special providence to Sierra Flat. It was read by camp-fires, in lonely cabins, in flaring bar-rooms and noisy saloons, and declaimed from the boxes of stage-coaches. It was sung in Poker Flat with the addition of a local chorus, and danced as an unhallowed rhythmic dance by the Pyrrhic phalanx of One Horse Gulch, known as "The Festive Stags of Calaveras." Some unhappy ambiguities of expression gave rise to many new readings, notes, and commentaries, which, I regret to state, were more often marked by ingenuity than delicacy of thought or expression.

Never before did poet acquire such sudden local reputation. From the seclusion of McCorkle's cabin and the obscurity of culinary labours he was haled forth into the glowing sunshine of Fame. The name of Chubbuck was written in letters of chalk on unpainted walls and carved with a pick on the sides of tunnels. A drink known variously as "The Chubbuck Tranquilliser" or "The Chubbuck Exalter" was dispensed at the bars. For some weeks a rude design for a Chubbuck statue, made up of illustrations from circus and melodeon posters, representing the genius of Calaveras in brief skirts on a flying steed in the act of crowning the poet Chubbuck, was visible at Keeler's Ferry. The poet himself was overborne with invitations to drink and extravagant congratulations. The meeting between Colonel Starbottle of Siskiyon and Chubbuck, as previously arranged by our "Boston," late of Rearing Camp, is said to have been indescribably affecting. The Colonel embraced him unsteadily. "I could not return to my constituents at Siskiyon, sir, if this hand, which has grasped that of the gifted Prentice and the lamented Poe, should not have been honoured by the touch of the godlike Chubbuck.

Gentlemen, American literature is looking up. Thank you! I will take sugar in mine." It was "Boston" who indited letters of congratulations from H. W. Longfellow, Tennyson, and Browning to Mr. Chubbuck, deposited them in the Sierra Flat post-office, and obligingly consented to dictate the replies.

The simple faith and unaffected delight with which these manifestations were received by the poet and his patron might have touched the hearts of these grim masters of irony, but for the sudden and equal development in both of the variety of weak natures. Mr. McCorkle basked in the popularity of his protégé, and became alternately supercilious or patronising toward the dwellers of Sierra Flat; while the poet, with hair carefully oiled and curled, and bedecked with cheap jewellery and flaunting neck-handkerchief, paraded himself before the single hotel. As may be imagined, this new disclosure of weakness afforded intense satisfaction to Sierra Flat, gave another lease of popularity to the poet, and suggested another idea to the facetious "Boston."

At that time a young lady popularly and professionally known as the "California Pet" was performing to enthusiastic audiences in the interior. Her speciality lay in the personation of youthful masculine character; as a *gamin* of the street she was irresistible, as a negro-dancer she carried the honest miner's heart by storm. A saucy, pretty brunette, she had preserved a wonderful moral reputation even under the Jove-like advances of showers of gold that greeted her appearance on the stage at Sierra Flat. A prominent and delighted member of that audience was Milton Chubbuck. He attended every night. Every day he lingered at the door of the Union Hotel for a glimpse of the "California Pet." It was not long before he received a note from her,—in "Boston's" most popular and approved female hand,

—acknowledging his admiration. It was not long before “Boston” was called upon to indite a suitable reply. At last, in furtherance of his facetious design, it became necessary for “Boston” to call upon the young actress herself and secure her personal participation. To her he unfolded a plan, the successful carrying out of which he felt would secure his fame to posterity as a practical humorist. The “California Pet’s” black eyes sparkled approvingly and mischievously. She only stipulated that she should see the man first,—a concession to her feminine weakness which years of dancing Juba and wearing trousers and boots had not wholly eradicated from her wilful breast. By all means, it should be done. And the interview was arranged for the next week.

It must not be supposed that during this interval of popularity Mr. Chubbuck had been unmindful of his poetic qualities. A certain portion of each day he was absent from town,—“a communin’ with natur’,” as Mr. McCorkle expressed it,—and actually wandering in the mountain trails, or lying on his back under the trees, or gathering fragrant herbs and the bright-coloured berries of the Marzanita. These and his company he generally brought to the editor’s office late in the afternoon, often to that enterprising journalist’s infinite weariness. Quiet and uncommunicative, he would sit there patiently watching him at his work until the hour for closing the office arrived, when he would as quietly depart. There was something so humble and unobtrusive in these visits, that the editor could not find it in his heart to deny them, and accepting them, like the woodpeckers, as a part of his sylvan surroundings, often forgot even his presence. Once or twice, moved by some beauty of expression in the moist, shy eyes, he felt like seriously admonishing his visitor of his idle folly; but his glance falling upon the oiled hair and the gorgeous necktie,

he invariably thought better of it. The case was evidently hopeless.

The interview between Mr. Chubbuck and the "California Pet" took place in a private room of the Union Hotel ; propriety being respected by the presence of that arch-humorist, "Boston." To this gentleman we are indebted for the only true account of the meeting. However reticent Mr. Chubbuck might have been in the presence of of his own sex, toward the fairer portion of humanity he was, like most poets, exceedingly voluble. Accustomed as the "California Pet" had been to excessive compliment, she was fairly embarrassed by the extravagant praises of her visitor. Her personation of boy characters, her dancing of the "champion jig," were particularly dwelt upon with fervid but unmistakable admiration. At last, recovering her audacity and emboldened by the presence of "Boston," the "California Pet" electrified her hearers by demanding, half jestingly, half viciously, if it were as a boy or a girl that she was the subject of his flattering admiration.

"That knocked him out o' time," said the delighted "Boston," in his subsequent account of the interview. "But do you believe the d—d fool actually asked her to take him with her ; wanted to engage in the company."

The plan, as briefly unfolded by "Boston," was to prevail upon Mr. Chubbuck to make his appearance in costume (already designed and prepared by the inventor) before a Sierra Flat audience, and recite an original poem at the Hall immediately on the conclusion of the "California Pet's" performance. At a given signal the audience were to rise and deliver a volley of unsavoury articles (previously provided by the originator of the scheme) ; then a select few were to rush on the stage, seize the poet, and, after marching him in triumphal procession through the town, were to deposit him beyond its uttermost limits, with strict

injunctions never to enter it again. To the first part of the plan the poet was committed ; for the latter portion it was easy enough to find participants.

The eventful night came, and with it an audience that packed the long narrow room with one dense mass of human beings. The "California Pet" never had been so joyous, so reckless, so fascinating and audacious before. But the applause was tame and weak compared to the ironical outburst that greeted the second rising of the curtain and the entrance of the born poet of Sierra Flat. Then there was a hush of expectancy, and the poet stepped to the footlights and stood with his manuscript in his hand.

His face was deadly pale. Either there was some suggestion of his fate in the faces of his audience, or some mysterious instinct told him of his danger. He attempted to speak, but faltered, tottered, and staggered to the wings.

Fearful of losing his prey, "Boston" gave the signal and leaped upon the stage. But at the same moment a light figure darted from behind the scenes, and delivering a kick that sent the discomfited humorist back among the musicians, cut a pigeon-wing, executed a double-shuffle, and then advancing to the footlights with that inimitable look, that audacious swagger and utter *abandon* which had so thrilled and fascinated them a moment before, uttered the characteristic speech, "Wot are you goin' to hit a man fur when he's down, s-a-a-y?"

The look, the drawl, the action, the readiness, and above all the downright courage of the little woman, had its effect. A roar of sympathetic applause followed the act. "Cut and run while you can," she whispered hurriedly over her one shoulder, without altering the other's attitude of pert and saucy defiance toward the audience. But even as she spoke, the poet tottered and sank fainting upon the stage.

Then she threw a despairing whisper behind the scenes, "Ring down the curtain."

There was a slight movement of opposition in the audience, but among them rose the burly shoulders of Yuba Bill, the tall, erect figure of Henry York of Sandy Bar, and the colourless, determined face of John Oakhurst. The curtain came down.

Behind it knelt the "California Pet" beside the prostrate poet. "Bring me some water. Run for a doctor. Stop!! CLEAR OUT, ALL OF YOU!"

She had unloosed the gaudy cravat and opened the shirt-collar of the insensible figure before her. Then she burst into an hysterical laugh.

"Manuela!"

Her tiring-woman, a Mexican half-breed, came toward her.

"Help me with him to my dressing-room, quick; then stand outside and wait. If any one questions you, tell them he's gone. Do you hear? HE's gone."

The old woman did as she was bade. In a few moments the audience had departed. Before morning so also had the "California Pet," Manuela, and the poet of Sierra Flat.

But, alas! with them also had departed the fair fame of the "California Pet." Only a few, and these, it is to be feared, of not the best moral character themselves, still had faith in the stainless honour of their favourite actress. "It was a mighty foolish thing to do, but it'll all come out right yet." On the other hand, a majority gave her full credit and approbation for her undoubted pluck and gallantry, but deplored that she should have thrown it away upon a worthless object. To elect for a lover the despised and ridiculed vagrant of Sierra Flat, who had not even the manliness to stand up in his own defence, was not only

evidence of inherent moral depravity, but was an insult to the community. Colonel Starbottle saw in it only another instance of extreme frailty of the sex; he had known similar cases; and remembered distinctly, sir, how a well-known Philadelphia heiress, one of the finest women that ever rode in her kerridge, that, gad, sir! had thrown over a Southern member of Congress to consort with a d—d nigger. The Colonel had also noticed a singular look in the dog's eye which he did not entirely fancy. He would not say anything against the lady, sir, but he had noticed——And here haply the Colonel became so mysterious and darkly confidential as to be unintelligible and inaudible to the bystanders.

A few days after the disappearance of Mr. Chubbuck a singular report reached Sierra Flat, and it was noticed that "Boston," who since the failure of his elaborate joke had been even more depressed in spirits than is habitual with great humorists, suddenly found that his presence was required in San Francisco. But as yet nothing but the vaguest surmises were afloat, and nothing definite was known.

It was a pleasant afternoon when the editor of the "Sierra Flat Record" looked up from his case and beheld the figure of Mr. Morgan McCorkle standing in the doorway. There was a distressed look on the face of that worthy gentleman that at once enlisted the editor's sympathising attention. He held an open letter in his hand as he advanced toward the middle of the room.

"As a man as has allers borne a fair reputation," began Mr. McCorkle slowly, "I should like, if so be as I could, Mister Editor, to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

Mr. Editor begged him to proceed.

"Ye may not disremember that about a month ago I

fetch'd here what so be as we'll call a young man whose name might be as it were Milton—Milton Chubbuck."

Mr. Editor remembered perfectly.

"Thet same party I'd knowed better nor fower year, two on 'em campin' out together. Not that I'd known him all the time, fur he war shy and strange at spells, and had odd ways that I took war nat'ral to a borned poet. Ye may remember that I said he was a borned poet?"

The editor distinctly did.

"I picked this same party up in St. Jo., taking a fancy to his face, and kinder calklating he'd runned away from home; for I'm a married man, Mr. Editor, and hev children of my own,—and thinkin' belike he was a borned poet."

"Well?" said the editor.

"And as I said before, I should like now to make a correction in the columns of your valooable paper."

"What correction?" asked the editor.

"I said, ef you remember my words, as how he was a borned poet."

"Yes."

"From statements in this yer letter it seems as how I war wrong."

"Well?"

"She war a woman."

## The Princess Bob and her Friends.

SHE was a Klamath Indian. Her title was, I think, a compromise between her claim as daughter of a chief and gratitude to her earliest white protector, whose name, after the Indian fashion, she had adopted. "Bob" Walker had taken her from the breast of her dead mother at a time when the sincere volunteer soldiery of the California frontier were impressed with the belief that extermination was the manifest destiny of the Indian race. He had with difficulty restrained the noble zeal of his compatriots long enough to convince them that the exemption of one Indian baby would not invalidate this theory. And he took her to his home,—a pastoral clearing on the banks of the Salmon River,—where she was cared for after a frontier fashion.

Before she was nine years old, she had exhausted the scant kindness of the thin, overworked Mrs. Walker. As a playfellow of the young Walkers she was unreliable ; as a nurse for the baby she was inefficient. She lost the former in the trackless depths of a redwood forest ; she basely abandoned the latter in an extemporised cradle, hanging like a chrysalis to a convenient bough. She lied and she stole,—two unpardonable sins in a frontier community, where truth was a necessity and provisions were the only property. Worse than this, the outskirts of the clearing were sometimes haunted by blanketed tatterdema-

lions with whom she had mysterious confidences. Mr. Walker more than once regretted his indiscreet humanity; but she presently relieved him of responsibility, and possibly of blood-guiltiness, by disappearing entirely.

When she reappeared, it was at the adjacent village of Logport, in the capacity of housemaid to a trader's wife, who, joining some little culture to considerable conscientiousness, attempted to instruct her charge. But the Princess proved an unsatisfactory pupil to even so liberal a teacher. She accepted the alphabet with great good-humour, but always as a pleasing and recurring novelty, in which all interest expired at the completion of each lesson. She found a thousand uses for her books and writing materials other than those known to civilised children. She made a curious necklace of bits of slate pencil; she constructed a miniature canoe from the pasteboard covers of her primer; she bent her pens into fish-hooks, and tattooed the faces of her younger companions with blue ink. Religious instruction she received as good-humouredly, and learned to pronounce the name of the Deity with a cheerful familiarity that shocked her preceptress. Nor could her reverence be reached through analogy; she knew nothing of the Great Spirit, and professed entire ignorance of the Happy Hunting Grounds. Yet she attended divine service regularly, and as regularly asked for a hymn-book; and it was only through the discovery that she had collected twenty-five of these volumes and had hidden them behind the woodpile, that her connection with the First Baptist Church of Logport ceased. She would occasionally abandon these civilised and Christian privileges, and disappear from her home, returning after several days of absence with an odour of bark and fish, and a peace-offering to her mistress in the shape of venison or game.

To add to her troubles, she was now fourteen, and, accord-

ing to the laws of her race, a woman. I do not think the most romantic fancy would have called her pretty. Her complexion defied most of those ambiguous similes through which poets unconsciously apologise for any deviation from the Caucasian standard. It was not wine nor amber coloured; if anything, it was smoky. Her face was tattooed with red and white lines on one cheek, as if a fine-toothed comb had been drawn from cheekbone to jaw, and, but for the good-humour that beamed from her small berry-like eyes and shone in her white teeth, would have been repulsive. She was short and stout. In her scant drapery and unrestrained freedom she was hardly statuesque, and her more unstudied attitudes were marred by a simian habit of softly scratching her left ankle with the toes of her right foot in moments of contemplation.

I think I have already shown enough to indicate the incongruity of her existence with even the low standard of civilisation that obtained at Logport in the year 1860. It needed but one more fact to prove the far-sighted political sagacity and prophetic ethics of those sincere advocates of extermination, to whose virtues I have done but scant justice in the beginning of this article. This fact was presently furnished by the Princess. After one of her periodical disappearances,—this time unusually prolonged,—she astonished Logport by returning with a half-breed baby of a week old in her arms. That night a meeting of the hard-featured serious matrons of Logport was held at Mrs. Brown's. The immediate banishment of the Princess was demanded. Soft-hearted Mrs. Brown endeavoured vainly to get a mitigation or suspension of the sentence. But, as on a former occasion, the Princess took matters into her own hands. A few mornings afterwards, a wicker cradle containing an Indian baby was found hanging on the handle of the door of the First Baptist Church. It was

the Parthian arrow of the flying Princess. From that day Logport knew her no more.

It had been a bright clear day on the upland, so clear that the ramparts of Fort Jackson and the flagstaff were plainly visible twelve miles away from the long curving peninsula that stretched a bared white arm around the peaceful waters of Logport Bay. It had been a clear day upon the sea-shore, albeit the air was filled with the flying spume and shifting sand of a straggling beach whose low dunes were dragged down by the long surges of the Pacific and thrown up again by the tumultuous trade-winds. But the sun had gone down in a bank of fleecy fog that was beginning to roll in upon the beach. Gradually the headland at the entrance of the harbour and the lighthouse disappeared, then the willow fringe that marked the line of Salmon River vanished, and the ocean was gone. A few sails still gleamed on the waters of the bay; but the advancing fog wiped them out one by one, crept across the steel-blue expanse, swallowed up the white mills and single spire of Logport, and, joining with reinforcements from the marshes, moved solemnly upon the hills. Ten minutes more and the landscape was utterly blotted out; simultaneously the wind died away and a death-like silence stole over sea and shore. The faint clang, high overhead, of unseen brent, the nearer call of invisible plover, the lap and wash of undistinguishable waters, and the monotonous roll of the vanished ocean, were the only sounds. As night deepened, the far-off booming of the fog-bell on the headland at intervals stirred the thick air.

Hard by the shore of the bay, and half hidden by a drifting sandhill, stood a low nondescript structure, to whose composition sea and shore had equally contributed. It was built partly of logs and partly of driftwood and tarred

canvas. Joined to one end of the main building—the ordinary log-cabin of the settler—was the half-round pilot-house of some wrecked steamer, while the other gable terminated in half of a broken whaleboat. Nailed against the boat were the dried skins of wild animals, and scattered about lay the flotsam and jetsam of many years' gathering,—bamboo crates, casks, hatches, blocks, oars, boxes, part of a whale's vertebræ, and the blades of swordfish. Drawn up on the beach of a little cove before the house lay a canoe. As the night thickened and the fog grew more dense, these details grew imperceptible, and only the windows of the pilot-house, lit up by a roaring fire within the hut, gleamed redly through the mist.

By this fire, beneath a ship's lamp that swung from the roof, two figures were seated, a man and a woman. The man, broad-shouldered and heavily bearded, stretched his listless powerful length beyond a broken bamboo chair with his eyes fixed on the fire. The woman crouched cross-legged upon the broad earthen hearth, with her eyes blinkingly fixed on her companion. They were small, black, round, berry-like eyes, and as the firelight shone upon her smoky face, with its one striped cheek of gorgeous brilliancy, it was plainly the Princess Bob and no other.

Not a word was spoken. They had been sitting thus for more than an hour, and there was about their attitude a suggestion that silence was habitual. Once or twice the man rose and walked up and down the narrow room, or gazed absently from the windows of the pilot-house, but never by look or sign betrayed the slightest consciousness of his companion. At such times the Princess from her nest by the fire followed him with eyes of canine expectancy and wistfulness. But he would as inevitably return to his contemplation of the fire, and the Princess to her blinking watchfulness of his face.

They had sat there silent and undisturbed for many an evening in fair weather and foul. They had spent many a day in sunshine and storm, gathering the unclaimed spoil of sea and shore. They had kept these mute relations, varied only by the incidents of the hunt or meagre household duties, for three years, ever since the man, wandering moodily over the lonely sands, had fallen upon the half-starved woman lying in the little hollow where she had crawled to die. It had seemed as if they would never be disturbed, until now, when the Princess started, and, with the instinct of her race, bent her ear to the ground.

The wind had risen and was rattling the tarred canvas. But in another moment there plainly came from without the hut the sound of voices. Then followed a rap at the door; then another rap; and then, before they could rise to their feet, the door was flung briskly open.

"I beg your pardon," said a pleasant but somewhat decided contralto voice, "but I don't think you heard me knock. Ah! I see you did not. May I come in?"

There was no reply. Had the battered figurehead of the Goddess of Liberty, which lay deeply embedded in the sand on the beach, suddenly appeared at the door demanding admittance, the occupants of the cabin could not have been more speechlessly and hopelessly astonished than at the form which stood in the open doorway.

It was that of a slim, shapely, elegantly dressed young woman. A scarlet-lined silken hood was half thrown back from the shining mass of the black hair that covered her small head; from her pretty shoulders dropped a fur cloak, only restrained by a cord and tassel in her small gloved hand. Around her full throat was a double necklace of large white beads, that by some cunning feminine trick relieved with its infantile suggestion the strong decision of her lower face.

"Did you say yes? Ah! thank you. We may come in, Barker." (Here a shadow in a blue army overcoat followed her into the cabin, touched its cap respectfully, and then stood silent and erect against the wall.) "Don't disturb yourself in the least, I beg. What a distressingly unpleasant night! Is this your usual climate?"

Half graciously, half absently overlooking the still embarrassed silence of the group, she went on: "We started from the fort over three hours ago,—three hours ago, wasn't it, Barker?"—(the erect Barker touched his cap)—"to go to Captain Emmons's quarters on Indian Island,—I think you call it Indian Island, don't you?"—(she was appealing to the awe-stricken Princess)—"and we got into the fog and lost our way; that is, Barker lost his way"—(Barker touched his cap deprecatingly)—"and goodness knows where we didn't wander to until we mistook your light for the lighthouse and pulled up here. No, no, pray keep your seat, do! Really, I must insist."

Nothing could exceed the languid grace of the latter part of this speech,—nothing except the easy unconsciousness with which she glided by the offered chair of her stammering, embarrassed host, and stood beside the open hearth.

"Barker will tell you," she continued, warming her feet by the fire, "that I am Miss Portfire, daughter of Major Portfire, commanding the post. Ah, excuse me, child!" (She had accidentally trodden upon the bare yellow toes of the Princess.) "Really, I did not know you were there. I am very near-sighted." (In confirmation of her statement, she put to her eyes a dainty double eyeglass that dangled from her neck.) "It's a shocking thing to be near-sighted, isn't it?"

If the shamefaced uneasy man to whom this remark was addressed could have found words to utter the thought that even in his confusion struggled uppermost in his mind, he would, looking at the bold, dark eyes that questioned

him, have denied the fact. But he only stammered, "Yes." The next moment, however, Miss Portfire had apparently forgotten him and was examining the Princess through her glass.

"And what is your name, child?"

The Princess, beatified by the eyes and eyeglass, showed all her white teeth at once, and softly scratched her leg.

"Bob."

"Bob? What a singular name!"

Miss Portfire's host here hastened to explain the origin of the Princess's title.

"Then *you* are Bob." (Eyeglass.)

"No, my name is Grey,—John Grey." And he actually achieved a bow where awkwardness was rather the air of imperfectly recalling a forgotten habit.

"Grey?—ah! let me see. Yes, certainly. You are Mr. Grey, the recluse, the hermit, the philosopher, and all that sort of thing. Why, certainly, Dr. Jones, our surgeon, has told me all about you. Dear me, how interesting a rencontre! Lived all alone here for seven—was it seven years?—yes, I remember now. Existed quite *au naturel*, one might say. How odd! Not that I know anything about that sort of thing, you know. I've lived always among people, and am really quite a stranger, I assure you. But honestly, Mr.—I beg your pardon—Mr. Grey, how do you like it?"

She had quietly taken his chair and thrown her cloak and hood over its back, and was now thoughtfully removing her gloves. Whatever were the arguments,—and they were doubtless many and profound,—whatever the experience,—and it was doubtless hard and satisfying enough,—by which this unfortunate man had justified his life for the last seven years, somehow they suddenly became trivial and terribly ridiculous before this simple but practical question.

"Well, you shall tell me all about it after you have given me something to eat. We will have time enough; Barker cannot find his way back in this fog to-night. Now don't put yourselves to any trouble on my account. Barker will assist."

Barker came forward. Glad to escape the scrutiny of his guest, the hermit gave a few rapid directions to the Princess in her native tongue, and disappeared in the shed. Left a moment alone, Miss Portfire took a quick, half-audible, feminine inventory of the cabin. "Books, guns, skins, *one* chair, *one* bed, no pictures, and no looking-glass!" She took a book from the swinging shelf and resumed her seat by the fire as the Princess re-entered with fresh fuel. But while kneeling on the hearth the Princess chanced to look up and met Miss Portfire's dark eyes over the edge of her book.

"Bob!"

The Princess showed her teeth.

"Listen! Would you like to have fine clothes, rings, and beads like these, to have your hair nicely combed and put up so? Would you?"

The Princess nodded violently.

"Would you like to live with me and have them? Answer quickly. Don't look round for *him*. Speak for yourself. Would you? Hush! never mind now."

The hermit re-entered, and the Princess, blinking, retreated into the shadow of the whaleboat shed, from which she did not emerge even when the homely repast of cold venison, ship-biscuit, and tea was served. Miss Portfire noticed her absence. "You really must not let me interfere with your usual simple ways. Do you know this is exceedingly interesting to me, so pastoral and patriarchal, and all that sort of thing. I must insist upon the Princess coming back; really I must"

But the Princess was not to be found in the shed, and Miss Portfire, who the next minute seemed to have forgotten all about her, took her place in the single chair before an extemporised table. Barker stood behind her, and the hermit leaned against the fireplace. Miss Portfire's appetite did not come up to her protestations. For the first time in seven years it occurred to the hermit that his ordinary victual might be improved. He stammered out something to that effect.

"I have eaten better and worse," said Miss Portfire, quietly.

"But I thought you—that is, you said"——

"I spent a year in the hospitals, when father was on the Potomac," returned Miss Portfire, composedly. After a pause she continued: "You remember after the second Bull Run—— But, dear me! I beg your pardon; of course, you know nothing about the war and all that sort of thing, and don't care." (She put up her eyeglass and quietly surveyed his broad, muscular figure against the chimney.) "Or, perhaps, your prejudices—But then, as a hermit you know you have no politics, of course. Please don't let me bore you."

To have been strictly consistent, the hermit should have exhibited no interest in this topic. Perhaps it was owing to some quality in the narrator, but he was constrained to beg her to continue in such phrases as his unfamiliar lips could command. So that, little by little, Miss Portfire yielded up incident and personal observation of the contest then raging; with the same half-abstracted, half-unconcerned air that seemed habitual to her, she told the stories of privation, of suffering, of endurance, and of sacrifice. With the same assumption of timid deference that concealed her great self-control, she talked of principles and rights. Apparently without enthusiasm and without effort, of which his morbid

nature would have been suspicious, she sang the great American Iliad in a way that stirred the depths of her solitary auditor to its massive foundations. Then she stopped and asked quietly, "Where is Bob?"

The hermit started. He would look for her. But Bob, for some reason, was not forthcoming. Search was made within and without the hut, but in vain. For the first time that evening Miss Portfire showed some anxiety. "Go," she said to Barker, "and find her. She *must* be found; stay, give me your overcoat, I'll go myself." She threw the overcoat over her shoulders and stepped out into the night. In the thick veil of fog that seemed suddenly to inwrap her, she stood for a moment irresolute, and then walked toward the beach, guided by the low wash of waters on the sand. She had not taken many steps before she stumbled over some dark, crouching object. Reaching down her hand she felt the coarse, wiry mane of the Princess.

"Bob!"

There was no reply.

"Bob. I've been looking for you, come."

"Go 'way."

"Nonsense, Bob. I want you to stay with me to-night, come."

"Injin squaw no good for waugee woman. Go 'way."

"Listen, Bob. You are daughter of a chief: so am I. Your father had many warriors: so has mine. It is good that you stay with me. Come."

The Princess chuckled and suffered herself to be lifted up. A few moments later and they re-entered the hut, hand in hand.

With the first red streaks of dawn the next day the erect Barker touched his cap at the door of the hut. Beside him stood the hermit, also just risen from his blanketed nest in the sand. Forth from the hut, fresh as the morning air,

stepped Miss Portfire, leading the Princess by the hand. Hand in hand also they walked to the shore, and when the Princess had been safely bestowed in the stern sheets, Miss Portfire turned and held out her own to her late host.

"I shall take the best of care of her, of course. You will come and see her often. I should ask you to come and see me, but you are a hermit, you know, and all that sort of thing, But if it's the correct anchorite thing, and can be done, my father will be glad to requite you for this night's hospitality. But don't do anything on my account that interferes with your simple habits. Good-bye."

She handed him a card, which he took mechanically.

"Good-bye."

The sail was hoisted, and the boat shoved off. As the fresh morning breeze caught the white canvas it seemed to bow a parting salutation. There was a rosy flush of promise on the water, and as the light craft darted forward toward the ascending sun, it seemed for a moment uplifted in its glory.

Miss Portfire kept her word. If thoughtful care and intelligent kindness could regenerate the Princess, her future was secure. And it really seemed as if she were for the first time inclined to heed the lessons of civilisation, and profit by her new condition. An agreeable change was first noticed in her appearance. Her lawless hair was caught in a net, and no longer strayed over her low forehead. Her unstable bust was stayed and upheld by French corsets; her plantigrade shuffle was limited by heeled boots. Her dresses were neat and clean, and she wore a double necklace of glass beads. With this physical improvement there also seemed some moral awakening. She no longer stole nor lied. With the possession of personal property came a respect for that of others. With increased

dependence on the word of those about her came a thoughtful consideration of her own. Intellectually she was still feeble, although she grappled sturdily with the simple lessons which Miss Portfire set before her. But her zeal and simple vanity outran her discretion, and she would often sit for hours with an open book before her, which she could not read. She was a favourite with the officers at the fort, from the Major, who shared his daughter's prejudices and often yielded to her powerful self-will, to the subalterns, who liked her none the less that their natural enemies, the frontier volunteers, had declared war against her helpless sisterhood. The only restraint put upon her was the limitation of her liberty to the enclosure of the fort and parade; and only once did she break this parole, and was stopped by the sentry as she stepped into a boat at the landing.

The recluse did not avail himself of Miss Portfire's invitation. But after the departure of the Princess he spent less of his time in the hut, and was more frequently seen in the distant marshes of Eel River and on the upland hills. A feverish restlessness, quite opposed to his usual phlegm, led him into singular freaks strangely inconsistent with his usual habits and reputation. The purser of the occasional steamer which stopped at Logport with the mails reported to have been boarded, just inside the bar, by a strange, bearded man, who asked for a newspaper containing the last war telegrams. He tore his red shirt into narrow strips, and spent two days with his needle over the pieces and the tattered remnant of his only white garment; and a few days afterward the fishermen on the bay were surprised to see what, on nearer approach, proved to be a rude imitation of the national flag floating from a spar above the hut.

One evening, as the fog began to drift over the sand-hills, the recluse sat alone in his hut. The fire was dying un-

heeded on the hearth, for he had been sitting there for a long time, completely absorbed in the blurred pages of an old newspaper. Presently he arose, and, refolding it,—an operation of great care and delicacy in its tattered condition,—placed it under the blankets of his bed. He resumed his seat by the fire, but soon began drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair. Eventually this assumed the time and accent of some air. Then he began to whistle softly and hesitatingly, as if trying to recall a forgotten tune. Finally this took shape in a rude resemblance, not unlike that which his flag bore to the national standard, to Yankee Doodle. Suddenly he stopped.

There was an unmistakable rapping at the door. The blood which had at first rushed to his face now forsook it and settled slowly around his heart. He tried to rise, but could not. Then the door was flung open, and a figure with a scarlet-lined hood and fur mantle stood on the threshold. With a mighty effort he took one stride to the door. The next moment he saw the wide mouth and white teeth of the Princess, and was greeted by a kiss that felt like a baptism.

To tear the hood and mantle from her figure in the sudden fury that seized him, and to fiercely demand the reason of this masquerade, was his only return to her greeting. "Why are you here? did you steal these garments?" he again demanded in her guttural language, as he shook her roughly by the arm. The Princess hung her head. "Did you?" he screamed, as he reached wildly for his rifle.

"I did."

His hold relaxed, and he staggered back against the wall. The Princess began to whimper. Between her sobs, she was trying to explain that the Major and his daughter were going away, and that they wanted to send her to the

Reservation; but he cut her short. "Take off those things!" The Princess tremblingly obeyed. He rolled them up, placed them in the canoe she had just left, and then leaped into the frail craft. She would have followed, but with a great oath he threw her from him, and with one stroke of his paddle swept out into the fog, and was gone.

"Jessamy," said the Major, a few days after as he sat at dinner with his daughter, "I think I can tell you something to match the mysterious disappearance and return of your wardrobe. Your crazy friend, the recluse, has enlisted this morning in the Fourth Artillery. He's a splendid-looking animal, and there's the right stuff for a soldier in him, if I'm not mistaken. He's in earnest too, for he enlists in the regiment ordered back to Washington. Bless me, child, another goblet broken! you'll ruin the mess in glass-ware, at this rate."

"Have you heard anything more of the Princess, papa?"

"Nothing, but perhaps it's as well that she has gone. These cursed settlers are at their old complaints again about what they call 'Indian depredations,' and I have just received orders from head-quarters to keep the settlement clear of all vagabond aborigines. I am afraid, my dear, that a strict construction of the term would include your *protégé*."

The time for the departure of the Fourth Artillery had come. The night before was thick and foggy. At one o'clock a shot on the ramparts called out the guard and roused the sleeping garrison. The new sentry, Private Grey, had challenged a dusky figure creeping on the glacis, and, receiving no answer, had fired. The guard sent out presently returned, bearing a lifeless figure in their arms. The new sentry's zeal, joined with an ex-frontiersman's aim, was fatal.

They laid the helpless, ragged form before the guard-house door, and then saw for the first time that it was the

Princess. Presently she opened her eyes. They fell upon the agonised face of her innocent slayer, but haply without intelligence or reproach.

“Georgy!” she whispered.

“Bob!”

“All’s same now. Me get plenty well soon. Me make no more fuss. Me go to Reservation.”

Then she stopped, a tremor ran through her limbs, and she lay still. She had gone to the Reservation. Not that devised by the wisdom of man, but that one set apart from the foundation of the world, for the wisest as well as the meanest of His creatures.

END OF VOL. II.



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